

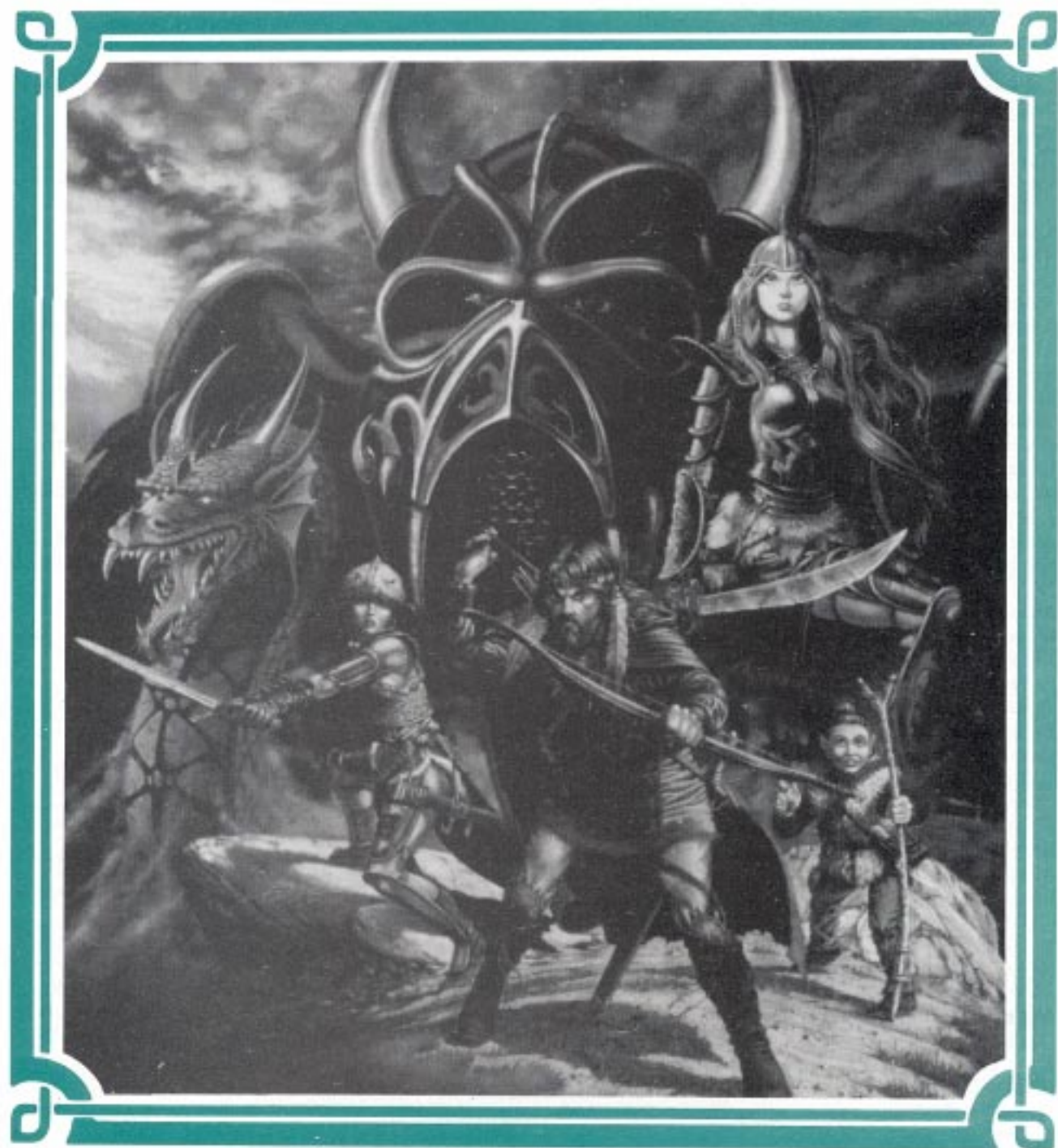
## Player's Guide to the

# Dragonlance®

Campaign







# Player's Guide To The dragonLance® Campaign

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# Welcome To The World of Krynn!

Ten years have passed since the creation of the DRAGONLANCE® fantasy setting. What began as a series of game adventures has grown into over three dozen novels and anthologies, six calendars, a comic book series, a number of best-selling computer games, award-winning miniatures sets, and numerous game materials. To a newcomer, this may seem daunting. Where do you start reading? Do you have to know the game to understand the books?

The simple answers to those questions are: Here, and No!

The *DRAGONLANCE® Guidebook*, what you now hold in your hands, is your passport into the multi-faceted world of Krynn. This volume is your gateway to the lands and legends of Ansalon, the continent where the DRAGONLANCE saga takes place. It includes details of the nations, the peoples, the myths and histories. You'll find out what-and when-the Great Cataclysm was, how wizards work to keep magic alive, and how kender believe the world was created. The *DRAGONLANCE® Guidebook* is both an introduction and a reference guide that can explain all the aspects of this unique fantasy world-without jargon, or confusing game statistics. You don't have to be familiar with the AD&D® game to read on!

## Natives of Krynn

On Krynn, people are not just people. You will meet many unique races—kender, draconians, minotaurs, gully dwarves, and high ogres, to name a few. On the other hand, some stock fantasy creatures do not appear—lycanthropes, orcs, half-arcs, and halflings. Every creature—even goblins and hobgoblins—is fully detailed and three-dimensional. A sense of wonder and amazement surrounds every species of Krynn.

## Rebuilding from Disaster

Since the Cataclysm, which disrupted society and remade the world of Krynn, scholarly knowledge in Ansalon has grown hopelessly confused. Every journey is, therefore, one of discovery. Once-mighty civilizations lie shattered and suspicious of their neighbors. Fearful folk distrust or revile their brightest and best, the mages and the Knights of Solamnia. Many cities still labor under the draconian yoke. Clearly, the time for heroes is at hand.

## Gods of Krynn

Krynn is ruled by a vast pantheon of gods. These gods are not simply myths, or explanations of natural phenomena from a simpler time. They take an active interest in the lives of their worshippers. They speak through their priests, and allow true believers the powers to perform miracles on their behalf.

Even so, the peoples of Krynn have abandoned the true gods, believing that the Cataclysm proved the gods had forsaken them. Only a handful of priests can still perform miracles of faith. But slowly the world is rediscovering the truth, and returning to the gods.

For their part, the gods continue their eternal struggles. They occasionally appear upon the world in corporeal-or avatar—forms, but more often shape history through worshippers, omens, and go-betweens.

## Stories and Sagas

The tales of Krynn center around glory, honor, and love of family, friends, and heart-mates. Treasure and personal gain are less important goals than justice, truth, knowledge, and freedom. Through personal heroism, adventurers face overwhelming odds and emerge victorious at the last. Fate diverts the lives of common men and women onto the path of heroism, making their small and private struggles pivotal in the grand future of the land. In all cases, the heroic spirit provides the brightest spark of hope in the darkness. Those who can laugh in the teeth of dragons or, single-handed and weaponless, charge a passel of draconian guards, can coax that spark of hope into a flame. And always behind the grim struggle of today lies the bright promise of tomorrow.





# geography of KRYNN

## The World Tour

Ansalon covers 1,300 miles east to west and 900 miles north to south—less than 1/30 of the surface of Krynn. But continuous winds and strong currents combine with the wide ocean to discourage exploration. Just as many people once accepted Earth was flat, so do Ansalonians assume they are the world. Only myths hint of lands beyond the sea. Most people are content right where they are. Their continent is rich in resources, brimming with adventure, full of unexplored mysteries.

Over a dozen sentient races call Ansalon their home. There are city-dwelling humans, barbarian tribes, demihumans (what a science-fiction author might call humanoids: dwarves and elves and centaurs) and intelligent monsters (the ugly races of fairytales: ogres and goblins and other nasties).

All of these inhabitants share a world view based on the triangle. Good, neutrality, and evil. Their gods split along this alignment. Their magical orders do as well. Even the Knights of Solamnia use a three-part symbol of Rose, Sword, and Crown.

Some things are familiar. Oaks and elms grow in the forests. Raw ores are refined into copper and steel. There are seven days in the week, and twelve months in the year.

Other details are unique. The city of Solace is built high above the ground—on the limbs of enormous vallenwood trees. Steel coins are more precious than gold in Ansalon's economies. The days and months are named for Ansalonian gods: Gileadai, not Sunday, and Reorxmunt, not September. In fact, each language has its own names, reflecting its own racial character and outlook. To a plainsman, January is Ice-Glaze, to a dwarf, Dark-Crypt, to an elf, Winter Night. To a kender, it's Snowfun, but to a goblin, the month is Famine.

The best introduction to Krynn is a tour of the world—the continent of Ansalon—as it is today. Starting from the west and traveling east, covering the continent from its northern reaches to the frigid south, what follows is a survey of the nations and cultures of Ansalon.

Each entry includes notes on the dominant culture or cultures of that country, the languages they speak, and their system of government. Following that is a short survey of prominent geographical features. The climate, with its effects on living and travel conditions, comes next. The political situation and the concerns of the nation's rulers follow. Trade policies and economic conditions round out the picture. Sidebars profile important personages, be they political, military or domestic figures.

Through this guide, you can get a concrete sense of the world. Who's fighting, who's trading, and who might be eyeing the border with a mind to expand their own territories. References to Krynnish races, religious groups, and other specifics are followed up in more detailed sections later in the book. When a particular god or species or historical event sparks your interest, skip to the pages that cover that topic. The tour is easy to resume whenever you want.

Interspersed with the geographical entries, Abbra Jehanni, a half-Kagonesti elf, tells of her adventures. Abbra, like you, finds much of Krynn a new experience, because she has spent most of her life in remote forests, isolated from the diversity of life that is her world's greatest treasure.



The tour starts in the northwest quadrant off Ansalon's coast. Enjoy the ride.

### San Crist

**Culture:** San Crist has two distinct and separate populations: gnomes and humans. Mount Nevermind is the capital of the gnomish people, and the main settlement. Humans' greatest concentration is at Castle Uth Wistan, the Solamnic outpost. Of course, Gnomish is the prevalent language, and Common, Solamnic, and Ergot are heavily spoken. The occasional ogre settlements speak their own tongue.

**Geography:** The northeastern segment of San Crist, island nation of the gnomes, contains a vast mountain range that rivals the central Khalkists. The most famous of these mountains is Mount Nevermind, a dormant volcano that has served the gnomes as homeland since before the Cataclysm.

Oddly, the gnomes prefer the rugged mountains in the north to the verdant forests and glades to the south. The western third of the island contains the Gunthar Forest and White-stone Glade. Here, Vinas Solamnius experienced the epiphany that inspired him to create the Knights of Solamnia. After the Cataclysm, the Knights of Solamnia gathered at this same site to regroup. Near at hand stands Castle Uth Wistan, a center for Solamnic Knights for almost two centuries. The forest around the castle contains hearty broad-leaf trees, some apple and cherry trees, and various tuber-type vegetables.

**Climate:** The winters upon San Crist tend to be mild, with

four months of freeze and moderate snow. At times, blizzards brew up in the Sirrion Sea and sweep across the islands, but only rarely do such snows block the passes for any length of time. The gnomes of Mount Nevermind, of course, worry little about the snow, for the geothermal activity around them melts it quickly. Summers on Sancrist are pleasant. The sea breezes reach far inland, cooling the island and breaking up clouds that might otherwise linger.

**Politics:** Mount Nevermind is governed by an elected Grand Council of clan leaders and guild masters. Over 200 clans and 50 guilds find representation in this council, and each of the representatives serves a lifetime appointment.

Although the gnomes are not intentionally isolationistic, their main concern lies not in diplomacy but in invention. Gnomes believe their best offering to the peace and prosperity of Kryn is technological advancement. They spend much time inventing gadgets for mining natural resources, defending against dragon attacks, and helping the mainland rebuild. The gnomes happily engage in talks with the kender of Hylo, though both parties tend to become distracted by one gadget or another, and no agreement has yet been reached.

**Trade:** The gnomes mine Mount Nevermind for gold, silver, platinum, jewels, and granite, which they export to their neighbors in return for food. The gnomes also ship gears, curios, and knickknacks to the outside world. Attempts to export gnomish inventions fail miserably because few other races have an aptitude for operating and repairing machines.

### Theodenēs



The gnome Theodenēs has a friendly, cheerful voice, and speaks fairly quickly. He always seems to have so much to say, and to fear he might not get to say it all. As is typical among gnomes, Theodenēs, though a fighter first and foremost, is an authority on most any imaginable topic.

He is adventurous and curious and deeply loves mechanical objects. He good-naturedly offers help to anyone and never learns from his mistakes.

Theodenēs gives advice and help to his companions during any crisis, no matter how much he is asked to refrain: he rushes head-long into battle only to trip the whole party; he offers to fix a ship and, when it sinks, confesses that he drilled holes in the hull to let water in for ballast.

Theodenēs has traveled everywhere and anywhere, and has picked up souvenirs from all the places he has been. He travels with a sabre-tooth tiger kitten named Star, who is almost as much trouble as he. Periodically, Theodenēs returns home to Mount Nevermind, either to deliver notes on battle-tested ideas, or to drop off his souvein-irtinkets. But he might be met almost anywhere on Ansalon, wherever there is adventure and mechanical gear to be had.

### Gunthar Uth Wistan



Lord Gunthar, Grand Master of the Knights of Solamnia, speaks in a deep, measured, and rumbling voice. He holds himself perfectly erect at all times. While conversing, he always maintains eye contact, seeming to judge a person's soul by the light in his or her eyes.

Gunthar is a concerned leader with a strong sense of duty

and honor. While he is an accomplished warrior, he truly hates unnecessary bloodshed, seeing it as wasteful and cruel. He feels that it shames a commander to lose even one more man than is absolutely necessary to attain a victory.

He feels that if one understands an opponent well enough, one is halfway to defeating him. In personal combat, Lord Gunthar often attempts to capture an adversary rather than slay him outright. In this way, an enemy can often be made a friend. This mercy should not be seen as weakness. With enemies such as draconians, who consider negotiation useless, Gunthar battles ruthlessly.

Gunthar Uth Wistan was forced to take up his title at an early age. His father died when Gunthar was only 14. He took his duties seriously and, realizing that he had much to learn, listened to his advisors well. The respect he held for his betters was returned when they elevated him to Grand Master. He took power when the Knights of Solamnia were still suffering in disrepute; he has done all he can to see their ancient greatness restored.

Gunthar's duties weigh heavily on him; he has few friends. He trusts and respects the leaders of the three orders of the Knights, but does not give in to the temptation to share his burdens with them.

Although his estates are here on Sancrist, Lord Gunthar is rarely found at home in these trying times. He travels all over Western Ansalon, visiting outposts and attending to matters that require his intervention.

## The Sales Pitch

It took most of our first day aboard ship for me to get up the nerve to venture out on deck. My master, Sendrothalas, laughed and taunted me for a Kagonesti landlubber. The crew jibed that my whole skin was turquoise-green, not just the tattooed curlicues across my forearms and cheeks. But seasickness was not my malady.

It was fear. The vastness of the open sky I found oppressive, the gray-green sea an enemy in the midst of being pounded flat. Our ship somehow shot between this plain and the pressing weight above like a quarrel from a crossbow. I felt at any moment we must be crushed. And yet, we were not.

To take my mind off our imminent demise, I suggested Sendrothalas continue with my lessons in magic. I had an ulterior motive: I had been reading ahead in the slim volume that had been my master's first spell book.

I had already learned the first two spells, somewhat to his astonishment. Wanting to impress him further, I had surreptitiously practiced the next spell, which summoned swarms of insects or vermin.

But reading about a spell and actually accomplishing it are two different things. Something in my intonation, my gestures—it wasn't right. So far I had summoned only fragments of bugs and bits of fur. I needed my master to show me. But he refused.

"You're trembling, green as a human."

My breath caught in my throat, but Sendrothalas seemed not to notice—or took it for further evidence of illness.

"I'm going up on deck to speak to the captain. Join me as soon as you feel better. If you can't find your sea legs, I won't risk you on the Thelgaard mission."

I think he was trying to challenge me to get well. Fortunately, our time on the ocean was short, as my master figured it. From Southern Ergoth, the island on which I was born, to Sancrist, the gnomish stronghold, is only one or two days if the winds hold and the ship is swift, and ours did and was. Sendrothalas tried to convince me that the tiny smudges caught between sea and sky were land. I watched them recede and grow as we traveled. By mid-morning of the second day, the smudge he called Sancrist had pried open the jaws of the horizon, and we could debark into the safety of the woods once more.

The two races of civilized elves, Silvanesti and Qualinesti, both refugees overrunning my homeland, vie politically like jealous siblings. Qualinesti pursued a friendship with Northern Ergoth's Emperor Mercador. My master served as Silvanesti's contact with that nation, to keep an ear on what was promised, how much, and when. When the Northern Ergothians reported the gnomes had developed a magic-detecting machine, naturally, Silvanesti had to investigate. So my master and I were sailing to the semi-yearly Technology Market in the city of Gavin, on Sancrist.

"Come on, girl, get my cloak, too, and let's get ashore. And Abbra," Sendrothalas speared me with his gaze. Quickly I dropped my own eyes floorward, assuming the pose of the servant any civilized elf would take me for. When we were alone, Sendrothalas admired my quick wit and what he called 'fresh perspective.' But we were on a mission now. I tried to act as dull and cowed as my people did in Silvamori. I thought I heard the smile of approval in his tone. "It will be crowded. Don't get lost."

Embarrassment heated my cheeks and I kept my head down, glad that the dark brown of my skin didn't show a blush. I was 66 years old, but I had spent most of my life with only my kin for company, deep in the woods. My second week in Silvamori, Sendrothalas had found me huddled in tears against the door of the Senate meetinghouse. I could read and write, so my brothers had offered my service as a scribe. But the crowds frightened me.

I shouldered my pack, swung Sendrothalas' cloak to my shoulder, and peered through the ragged fringe of hair I wore hanging across my forehead. In less than a year, I had become impervious to the bustle of Silvamori. I could handle crowds, now. To my mind, the vast ocean was more of a challenge, and I had not succumbed. Beyond the warehouses, the road ran in a gentle curve into the trees. Soon we would be safe under their familiar canopy.

But Sancrist had a rude surprise waiting for me. We traveled in the green shade of the woods for only a short while, marching along in a line of carts and travelers like some Silvanesti government procession. I had thought that traffic would get lighter as some of the travelers headed out to their own camps. Instead, it got more crowded.

Sendrothalas strode ahead of me, and it was all I could do, in the press of bodies, to keep his heather-hued jerkin in sight. The shade became spotty, and buildings grew together thicker than chokeweed, until there were no longer even trees. My master had laughed when I spoke of Silvamori as a city, and now I could see why.

"Watch where yer goin', stupid!" A sailor growled at me, elbowing me in the side as he passed. I turned, and nearly ran into a cart laden with pots and pans of shiny copper.

"Make way, youngster!" The woman who pushed the cart was round-faced and friendly. Her blunt ears marked her as human. I stared, and when I turned around again, Sendrothalas had vanished.

Compared to Silvamori, Gavin was enormous, and enormously more crowded, more noisy, more smelly—more everything. My master's words made sense now. I realized Sendrothalas was not just teasing me. But a more immediate problem was finding him again.

"My goodness, is that paint or a tattoo on your face? You must be a Kagonesti elf! I've never met one of your race before. Do you come to the market often? I bet it's your first time, dearie, 'cause you look lost. Well, you're in luck, because I'm terrific at finding things. Do you want some help?"

A small woman in a marigold-colored buckskin cloak smiled and fell in step beside me. A thick braid of soft brown hair framed her wrinkled face and hung down in a tassel by her left ear. That ear was pointed, her eyes the twinkling green of moss at the bottom of a brook.

I ducked my head as a servant should, and stumbled into the fellow in front of me.

"No, dearie, you have to watch where you're going, or no one will forgive you. I'm Millendria Gemgetter. You have a name?"

"Abbra," I said, stealing a sideways glance at her. "And I really have to hurry."

"I won't bite, you know. Now where are you hurrying to? Staying a long time, are you, with all those clothes you're carrying. Oops, dearie, you dropped this—"





The woman stooped, chattering all the while, and picked up the brooch Sendrothalas had worn on his right shoulder. It must have fallen off his cloak. I grimaced and hitched my load higher. Just what I needed—

“By Matheri, kender, keep your thieving hands off my possessions!” Sendrothalas’ angry voice sounded right beside me, making me jump and drop the cloak completely. The cart behind us swerved to keep moving, and sideswiped a party of white-haired children.

“Abbra, I told you to stay with me. Get lost!” my master shooed away the friendly little woman. I caught her shrug and wink as he waved his fist at her, and wondered what she had done wrong. But I kept my mouth shut and my eyes on the ground as Sendrothalas berated my slowness all the way into the inn. He went on muttering about kender, so I guessed that Millendria was one, but I didn’t see what she had done that was worth the fuss he made.

Sendrothalas had reached the Glaajakame Inn before he noticed I hadn’t kept up. He’d spoken for a room, and then gone back to the roadside to wait for my tardy arrival.

“And what do I find, but you’re getting robbed by a pick-pocket kender.”

“She was returning the brooch...” I don’t know why I bothered to argue when his temper was hot. Although the silver elves put down Kagonesti servants for their fierce tempers and their quick arguments, my master was just as quick to anger. And more implacable.

“She’s a kender. All kender are insatiably light-fingered. The silverware isn’t safe when they’re in the house, much less the jewelry. I don’t want you to speak to anyone unless I’ve

introduced you. Do you understand?”

I nodded automatically, and resumed unpacking our belongings. I hung my master’s fine linen shirt on one of the hooks on the wall, and shook out the dust from his cloak.

“And why you can’t keep a better grip on that cloak—this is the second time you’ve dropped it in the street.” He paced from the window back to the bed again, and I had to snatch the jewel case up before he trod on it.

“I want to take a look at the Market this afternoon, see what’s out there. The man we’re meeting is wearing a jay-blue half-cape with midnight trim. He’s got red hair, a thick beard—

“Human?”

“Yes, human!” Sendrothalas’ eyes narrowed. “You’ve seen a human before, haven’t you?”

My breath caught, which was crazy. I couldn’t keep reacting to that word! I forced my tone to be nonchalant. “Of course. When I was a child we used to trade herbs to the knights.”

“Well, this human is a bit more portly than a knight. His name is Lolliter Xalthan, and he is an advisor to the Emperor.” My master continued to explain his plans, and I let myself draw each breath a little more deeply, until at last my blood had cooled from its pounding. I reminded myself that even mages did not routinely read minds.

“You think you can handle that?” Sendrothalas asked in conclusion, and I realized I had missed the bulk of my instructions. He realized, too. For an instant his expression grew thunderous, but then he drew a deep breath. “I don’t know why I thought a primitive child could be trained like a real elf, truly I don’t. Hubris on my part. But we’ll have to make do.” Placing one slender hand on his hip and pointing with the other, he enunciated slowly, “I go this way, you go that way, and we meet here at sunset. Repeat it back to me.”

Meekly, I did, including the gestures. His face was impassive.

“And the description?”

I remembered that well enough; he began to seem pleased again.

“All right, out we go. I shan’t give you any coin; you’ll only lose it to kender. Don’t buy anything.”

I wondered where he thought I might have got money to spend, then, since he hadn’t taught me the spell to conjure it.

Eventually I got used to the constant jostling and noise of the market. In every booth, the short, brown-skinned, white-haired gnomes I had first taken for children stood on chairs and shouted sing-song at the tops of their lungs.

“The missus will adore this amazing labor-saving device...” one earnest little salesman crowed, holding up a metal box the size of a badger. Spikes stood in ranks across the back of one end, and a little bell and chain dangled from the other.

“Watch my amazing flying knives shave this turnip into bowstring-thin slices for frying...” Shreds of food flew in all directions from this multi-limbed object, sticking to the crowds’ garments and tangling in their hair. A tall man in front of me stepped back suddenly onto my foot. I limped onward.

Most of the booths had stacks of duplicate devices for outright sale, but from listening to the customers and the fast-talking gnomes, I found that a special section of one-of-a-kind gadgets would be auctioned off tomorrow. These unique



items were on display in the Technology Hall.

It was exhausting fighting the crowd. Several times I got caught up in the demonstrations of the machines, and forgot to look for the man in the jay-blue cape. I saw plenty of humans. There were more elves than I had thought would be here, given Sendrothalas' expressed opinion of gnomish hardware, but many of those I saw were the golden-haired Qualinesti. Maybe the other civilized elves were more tolerant of gears.

"For my demonstration of this magnificent mechanical wizard, I need a volunteer from the audience..." The spokesgnome held a large copper bowl upside down, showing the numerous holes and slots that pierced its surface, while his assistant displayed handfuls of wires, bands and spikes. "Long hair is essential..."

The spokesgnome ran a hand over his bald head, and the audience laughed appreciatively. I ran my own hand across the corona of my tightly coiled braids. Someone behind me jostled into my back, and I in turn bumped the broad, plain coat in front of me. I felt a hand grip my shoulder and turned to apologize.

"We got a live one," a deep voice proclaimed near my ear. The hand on my shoulder propelled me forward, toward the machine.

I tried the wriggle out of the grasp, not sure who had mistaken me, or for what. I found myself face to face with the beaming spokesgnome.

"And our volunteer's name is...?" He glanced at me, and then stared. "I say your eyes are the most amazing colors! I've never seen one green one brown how do you-" Leaning his lively face down to mine, the gnome lost his slow, barker's style of speech in his excitement. I tried to sort out the syllables into sense.

"One green and one brown" echoed in my head. My eyes!

I dropped abruptly to my hands and knees. The spokesgnome tumbled into the crowd behind me. Ducking right, I crawled under the skirt that covered the front of the booth, and scooted between, the table legs and crates of parts. When the noise of shouting faded, and I could no longer see peoples' legs in front of me, I judged it safe to emerge again.

I stood up between two booths in an alley where excess merchandise was kept, and put my hand up to my left eye. Gently I pulled back the lower lid. Yes, I could still feel the fleck of water from. I repeated the process with my right lid. Nothing.

Quickly, I emptied my belt pouch, and found the water bladder that held my supply of frond. I scribed the sign my mother had taught me on my lowered eyelid with my smallest finger. Rolling my eye right, I dropped the new fragment into the corner. Two blinks.

It felt good, but I rubbed the dust off the bronze side of the nearest gadget and peered at my reflection to be sure.

Two hazel eyes gazed solemnly back. I looked my part again. Relief made me almost dizzy.

I worked my way down the crowded alley, around crates of merchandise, until I reached the end booth. A cheerful gnomish woman pitched while her assistant held up a grid of iron, with fluffy sheep's wool padding and wire brushes wiggling at the ends of several short rods.

"How many times has this happened to you? You need a scroll..."

With the sun hanging low on the horizon and my heart as calm as it was likely to get in the press of people, I resumed

my search. I had half-hoped to see the friendly kender again, and I kept a look out for the marigold cloak. But I never saw her.

Sendrothalas'd had better luck than I did, after a fashion. He'd found Lolliter Xalthan.

"The device we're seeking is being demonstrated in the Technology Hall, and he wants my opinion as a wizard. Which fits conveniently with my assignment to look at it for the Senate. It's called an Arcane Component Analyzer and Mineral Assay, or some such nonsense. It doesn't detect magic, it analyzes magic. Or magical residues, perhaps. Then it tells what ingredients the spellcaster used." Sendrothalas didn't seem to think much of the concept.

"Doesn't everyone already know the components? Mages, I mean?"

"Magic is more complex than you understand, Abbra. Many people use, say, pork rind for that grease spell I taught you."

I nodded, even though he wasn't looking for an answer. I had a small pouch with scraps of pork rind tied to my belt. Real wizards might have many such pouches, each carrying ingredients for the magical spells they knew. I only had three, and one was empty.

"But a more powerful spell may have a dozen components. Why do you think wizards spend so much time perfecting spells? Why do they guard their spellbooks so carefully?" He looked thoughtful. "Of course, it's a gnomish device; it couldn't work."

"I saw plenty of demonstrations that worked... most of the time, even."

"After a fashion." Sendrothalas sounded doubtful still. Pacing back to the window, he paused and gazed out in the direction of the Market. The sky glowed with reflected torchlight and gnomish chemicals. Occasionally, small explosions and bursts like stars brightened the city. I had no idea if they were intentional.

My master turned back to me, his face hard with purpose. "I need to see the thing in action. And I'm fairly sure I'll want a private look."

"You mean, steal it?"

He almost laughed. "Not actually remove it from the building, no. Just test it. It'll depend on how useful it seems. Stick close to me, and remember: Don't buy anything."

Our destination was the building with the most lights and whirligigs decorating it. A huge frame of sparking candles on the roof spelled out the words Technology Hall. But the gnomes evidently had not perfected a method of lighting the frame. By the time the industrious team of gnomes lit all the candles in the letter G, those in the letter N were guttering stubs. As we reached the front steps, the candles proclaimed OGY H.

Things ran a little more smoothly inside the hall. Small signs pointed to various doors, proclaiming "Weather," "Copying," "Engineering," and finally "Analysis." A white-coated gnome with a badge naming him HALL MONITOR stepped forward.

"If you'll just give me your appointment card then I can direct you to the appropriated demonstration."

"No appointment." Sendrothalas interrupted the stream of words. As I had discovered, the best way to converse with the

gnomes was to listen for a key word or phrase, and respond to that, ignoring the rest. "We came to see the spell analyzer"

"Wouldthatbethe Wondrous Magician In A Box Practically Arcane Component Analyzer and Incredible Mineral-"

"Yes!" He bit the word off tightly. "Which door?"

"Juststepthiswaysirandmadamand'Illseeifyoucangetinat thislatehoureyouknowthedemonstrationisinprogress..." Still babbling, the gnome hurried forward, his coat flapping behind him.

The demonstration room was chilly, and immediately I saw why. Roped off from the audience was a large platform. At one end three gnomes in white coats swarmed around a table topped with a wire-sprouting, glass-tube-festooned conglomeration. On the other end stood a portly red-robed magician.

Between them stood a wall of ice.

"Would you look at that? He'd be useful to have in the ice house," the man in front of us nudged his neighbor.

"Only if he chips it, too."

"That would be a different spell, then, wouldn't it?"

Sendothalas glared his frosty, eleven glare at them, and the chatters subsided.

One of the gnomes hoisted a coil of wire to his shoulder and ran to the ice wall. He wrapped the wire around what looked like a knitting needle (my father had carved a set out of antler for my mother when I was 20) and plunged the needle into the ice.

Back at the device, a bell clanged and a puff of smoke rose, choking one of the attendant gnomes. The glass tubing clacked together. Something hard and shiny spanged into the front hopper. The remaining gnome thumped his companion on the back, scribbled something on a sheaf of notes, and held up the shiny chunk.

"You will see," he began in a surprisingly deep, carefully slow, voice, and the crowd shushed, "that the Analyzer has produced a piece of quartz. May I have the envelope, please?"

The coughing gnome beckoned to a human in the front row. The man handed forward a folded sheet of parchment. After some argument and handwaving among the gnomes, he opened it himself, and read, "A small piece of quartz."

The crowd cheered.

After basking in the applause a little while, the speaker gnome came to the front of the platform. Behind him, the other gnomes measured and fiddled, and hollered across the ice wall for the wizard to dispel his effect.

The speaker ignored the goings on. Though he spoke in a near-normal tone, his argument carried through the entire room.

Now, many people have told our production team that



the concept behind our particular invention is unsound? After all, a wizard has no use for an analyzer, being trained to such a task himself. It is his business to determine what kind of spell he uses, what its effects are, and what materials he needs to produce it.

"When we say that our instrument will enable its owner to determine the exact spell that was cast, our detractors counter that most spells are obvious in their purpose and effects, as is the ice wall we have just demonstrated.

"The most telling objection is that knowing the components of a spell will not in any way enable a non-magic user to perform the spell."

The gnome paused, and Sendothalas nodded in complete agreement, along with many in the audience.

"We do not disagree with these points."

There were murmurs and foot shufflings. Compared to the claims I'd heard outside in the Market, this gnome sounded like he wanted us not to buy his machine. The ice wall suddenly collapsed into a heap of chips with a clattering whoosh, and a swarm of gnomes with shovels and barrels set about scraping up the leavings.

"Our device is not intended to help the amateur learn magic. It was designed to save a mage from the drudgery of petty detection spells. By doing the grunt work for him, the Analyzer increases his study time. It increases his capacity to perfect new techniques. And it doesn't waste spells." As the murmurs swelled, the gnome held up his hand one last time, and silence descended.

"If these sound like useful attributes, please come to the auction at midday tomorrow, and bid on item 21,373. Our device includes a fully trained team of gnomish technicians, a one year warrantee on parts and labor, and the option to upgrade as further refinements become available. Good night."

"Fetch my herb belt."

Sendothalas only wore his herb belt when he was likely to use magic. It was late now, long past supper, and we had been contemplating the virtues and flaws of the gnomish machine-rather, Sendothalas had been contemplating them. I had been reading. It seemed a measure of his distraction that he did not even ask me what I read. Only later did I realize he didn't care.

We went out into the bright, noisy night, strolling through the populated areas, working around to the wood on the backside of the Technology Hall. Two guards stood at each entrance, front and back. The frame of candles still burned in segments over the front entrance, but the back made do with two sconced torches. It was a doorway almost identical to the house Sendothalas lived in in Silvamori, I realized with a start. No whistles or wires or gimcracks.

"I think a sleep spell is the easiest solution here, although they don't always affect gnomes."

This was my chance to prove my quickness, to convince Sendothalas that I was a worthy apprentice. I drew a reinforcing breath. I wanted him to be proud of me. I needed him to teach me. "What you want is a distraction. That spell that calls the bugs-teach me that one, and I'll do it."

"No."

"Why not?" I realized I was whining, but I couldn't seem to keep the note of impatience out of my voice.

His answer was harsh and final. "Just 'no,' Kagonesti. You'll never be able to handle that one. Be quiet, I need to concentrate!"

I felt an almost physical slap. He'd refused me. But he



couldn't refuse. I was the clever one. I was the Kagonesti who could learn. My master had bragged about me to his Silvanesti friends, taunting that their servants were less than I was. He couldn't mean 'never.'

As he opened his pouch of rose petals, ignoring me as if I were a... a puppy that had chewed his boots, I realized with a start that Sendrothalas meant exactly what he said. What I had taken as his interest in me was merely indulgence. Blindly, I had listened only to the praise in his comments, never to the conditions. "Very good," he would say, "for a Kagonesti."

Stupid, stupid, stupid.

I was as naive as any Silvanesti elf had ever accused my race of being. For long moments, I stared sightlessly at the gnomish guards as I fought down rage and despair. Had I been paying attention, I might have taken some perverse comfort in the fact that Sendrothalas' sleeping charm did not at first seem to affect the small, brown soldiers. But I missed his struggle, immersed in my own.

At last, the guards' erect postures slumped back against the stone pillars on either side of the door. Sendrothalas shook my shoulder.

"Let's move, Abbra. I don't know how long they'll be out." Numbly, I followed.

We had no further trouble with security. The gnomes kept their hinges well oiled, and their doors were susceptible to my master's knock spell. Soon we were back in the demonstration room with the Analyzer, lifting off its velvet covers.

"If they rigged it to spit quartz chunks, I want to know," my master muttered, poking the wires and peering into the convoluted brass funnel on the rear corner of the machine. "Where's the 'on' switch? These things always have an 'on' switch."

The words were meaningless to me. The most complex technology I'd seen before today had been the crossbow my brother hunted with. "Wasn't the gnome on this side..." I reached under the tubing, and brushed my fingers along the smooth metal channel. They caught on a small branch of wire. A bell chimed on the front of the contraption, sounding loud in the empty room. Steam puffed out the back. Sendrothalas glared, and wiped his face.

Soon, a string of flashing lights twinkled the way I remembered from the demonstration.

"Looks ready," I shrugged.

My master was tracing his fingers along the tubes and wires, a frown of concentration marring his smooth features. At last he stood.

"Invisibility should be a good test. The only question is—ah, here it is." He uncoiled the wire, and wrapped it around his ankle. Then he reached into his herb belt for the components, and cast the spell.

I saw the wire stretch taught at ankle height against nothing. Another puff of steam rose, the glass tubes rattled. A wet smack from the hopper signaled the machine had completed its analysis.

"Pfft!" Sendrothalas' voice snorted next to me, although there was no one there. "Not even a little close!"

I peered into the machine and saw an eyeball, most likely a pig's by the size of it, and a wad of grayish gunk. As I watched, the wad dented as if poked.

"Do you have to stay invisible?"

Sendrothalas appeared, prodding the gunk with his belt knife. "Chewing gum," he pronounced with disgust.

"What was it supposed to be?"

"Gum arabic, wrapped around an eyelash."

He seemed perversely disappointed, and I remembered a booth display I had seen in the afternoon. The crowd had started off disbelieving. But many of them stayed through a second demonstration, or even longer, cheering for the spokesgnome to get it right this time.

Regardless of what he had said, his posture told me Sendrothalas wanted the machine to work.

And I was furious all over again. He placed more faith in a gnomish invention than in my intelligence!

"Well, it was close," I heard myself say wheedlingly. "Eyelash, eyeball. Everybody's entitled to a second chance..."

He was tempted.

"But I don't want to waste a difficult spell testing some gnomish machinery." Sendrothalas paused. The building around us was quiet. No one knew we were here. The machine hiccupped a tiny puff of steam.

I fingered my own belt pouches idly, thinking how useless it was. I knew a few druid spells my mother had taught me, but those were not true magic. I had the slim volume Sendrothalas had let me read still tucked away in my pack—a laugh, since he had no intention of teaching me any further what about my dreams?

Bitterly, I hoped Sendrothalas got pleasure out of his gnomish machine. I hoped he, who had warned me so often, actually bought the stupid thing. It was the kind of student he deserved.

"I could try that summon swarm spell. That's easy enough, and not so flashy it'll give us away." He spoke. I had almost forgotten he was there.

"You're not afraid I'll learn it?"

"Drop it, Kagonesti."

"I think the fire shield might be a better test. There's two different forms you can choose, aren't there? The machine would have to be accurate to determine which one you cast."

He looked thoughtful. "That would be a good test. And if it works," his voice hardened, "then Silvanesti must have it."

Why did it matter to me which spell he used? I had a hunch, and a daring plan. As my master gathered his concentration and the necessary ingredients, so too my fingers crept into my pouch.

I wanted to guarantee the machine's success. And, I was the apprentice who stocked my master's magical components. I had to weigh and measure all of the ingredients he used for spell casting, parcel them into packets, tuck them into the appropriate pockets and pouches in his belt. Stupid Kagonesti that I was, I had to be familiar with the makings for all of his spells, so that my civilized master did not dirty his fingers with the dreary mechanics of his magic.

I knew which variation he would cast, for one version needed phosphorus, and the other, a living firefly or several firefly tails. He had only the tails in his belt.

Simple slight of hand would have been enough to dump the component into the hopper at the right time—if I had any myself. I didn't.

My anger tightened into a hard crystal lump where once I had had a heart. I did have the red scrap of cloth that was the material component for the bug-summoning spell.

And I was determined that it would work this time. If I summoned those lightning bugs, I proved I had the art for real magic. Then my master would have to teach me.

As Sendrothalas raised his voice in the ancient language

of magic, so too I whispered the words of my own spell. The red cloth crumpled between my fingers. I tried to grasp the essence of the spell just so, knowing that I had failed before, but reaching fiercely now...

On the other side of the table, Sendrothalas gestured. Wispy, blue-green flames licked across his jerkin and writhed about his legs, but they did not consume his clothing.

Concentrate, Abbra! I closed my eyes as the machine clanged and puffed, reaching for the control I needed.

I felt only tearing need.

A scuff on the floor told me my master was moving, and I opened my eyes to see the flames slowly winking out as he strode toward me. I swept my fingers over the hopper, finding nothing. I had failed. And so had it.

"Well?"

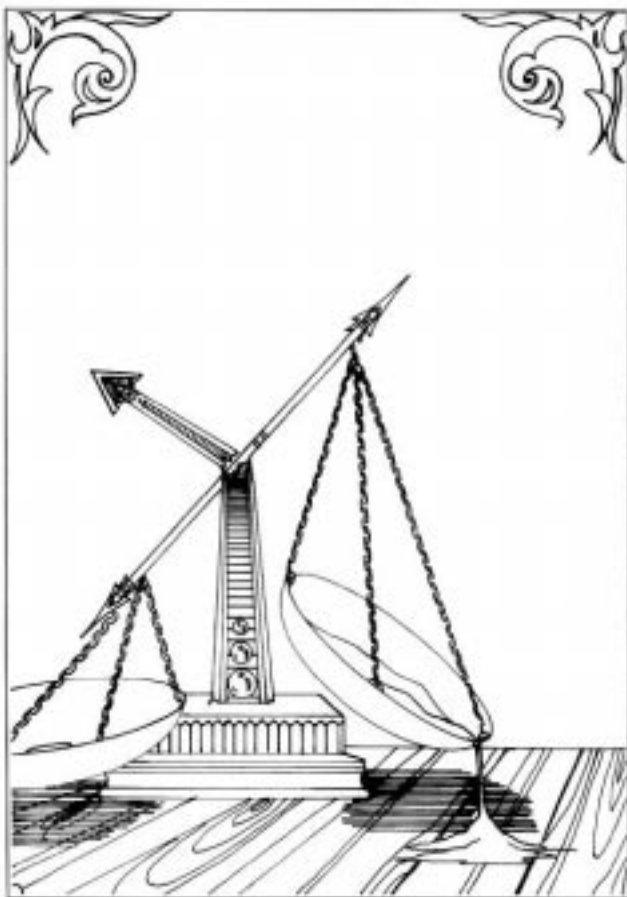
Sendrothalas bent down, peering deep into the throat of the thing. He puffed a breath up the tube. The blast of air jostled some wires together in a tinkling coda.

My shoulders sagged and I felt the sudden, draining numbness that follows the use of magic. It had worked? I hardly dared open my eyes, but I knew I must.

In the drifting dust, one glowing firefly sifted onto the table. Elation warred with disappointment. One insect seemed to be a pitiful "swarm"—and yet, it was just enough to make Sendrothalas believe the machine was functioning perfectly.

My master stared at the winking insect. But it was not suspicion that glowed in his eyes. It would never occur to him that I might have worked a spell he had not taught me. Slowly, a smile quirked the corners of his mouth. "Now, how much do I think the Ergothian is willing to bid?"

My ploy had succeeded.



## getting Lost

Everything itched. As punishment for my whining yesterday, Sendrothalas had gone to the auction alone, leaving me to break down a spice purchase bargain he'd stumbled upon here in Gavin. My skin crawled under the worn linen tunic that was my uniform. My eyes felt like they had sand in the lids. I scraped my bottom lip with my teeth, trying to alleviate the worst tickle without ruffling the delicate mound of powder I was weighing.

Balanced!

My usually walnut brown fingers nimbly crimped the next leaf into a neat envelope, then tilted the thin parchment square to meet it. Spice flowed in a miniature avalanche into the mouth of the envelope. I tapped the parchment once, twice, to loosen the last grains of fragrant powder, and scraped my teeth across my lip again.

My master would examine every envelope I had measured, checking the placement of the small dot of sealing sap that held the package closed, the preciseness of the corners, the suppleness of the leaves. Everything had to be just perfect. One sneeze now could ruin a week's work.

As if in response to that thought, the outer edge of my nostril itched fiercely. I wrinkled my nose, then sucked my upper lip tight against my teeth. The sharp, sweet flavor of spice burned my tongue.

My hands were covered with the sealing sap. Sticky threads clung to my fingers. Leaf mold and more airborne flecks of spice that had escaped my careful measurements blackened my skin and obscured the delicate tattoos that curled down my forearms almost to my knuckles. A stray strand of hair slid across the fringe that nearly obscured my eyes and flopped forward onto my cheek, its feathery brush a torment.

Three more leaves to go.

When I finished measuring this Karthaian nutmeg into the tiny, precise packets my master used for his spell-casting, I was supposed to press Sendrothalas' second cloak. Clamping down on my impatience, I scooped another mound of spice onto a parchment square, and set the load on the flat pan of the scale. It was underweight, and the pan bobbed back up toward my waiting fingers. One pinch more—two—three—

The door to the room swung open abruptly. A skirl of breeze blew across the hovering weighing pans, lifting a brief spice cloud into the air. I cried out involuntarily.

"What are you dawdling around in here for? Where's my cloak?" Sendrothalas' tone was impatient, his stride hurried. "Haven't you finished the nutmeg yet?"

The drifting spice stung my eyes. Though I didn't look up, I knew the lean Silvanesti noble was glaring at me, his hazel eyes snapping, his graceful arms crossed arrogantly across his chest. Keeping my head down, I said nothing. Before, my blind optimism had allowed me to tolerate this behavior. Now, his arrogance scraped like a raw bruise. I hastened to sweep up the spilled nutmeg, and added the scrapings to the heap on the parchment.

"No, no, no, you dolt! It must be pure. Any contamination and the spell is ruined. Throw that lot out and start over—Oh, I haven't time. Put it away, and you can finish it later. I've got the Analyzer, but Xalthan is understandably miffed, and I have to soothe some ruffled feelings. Humans! And where is my cloak?"

He came toward me, as it to pluck the garment from my hands. Only it was obvious I hadn't got it. I started to return



his thunderous glance, and felt the grit of spice sting my own. Remembering the incident in the market yesterday, I felt my heart squeeze in panic. Was the water frond still in place? I tucked my head down again. Hair drifted across my face.

While Sendrothalas thought Kagonesti were not much smarter than cooshee hounds, he reserved the depths of his scorn for half-humans, people whose blood mixed elven and human races.

All elves think they can identify half-breeds. Those of us with mixed blood tend to resemble our human parent, stockier of build and taller than a pure-blooded elf. Then too, half-human men sprout facial hair as they mature, something no true elf could ever do-or want to do.

In females, the evidence is not so plain. My mother, my very human mother, is slender and brown-skinned. But for her rounded ears, her more rapid aging, she could pass for Kagonesti.

Almost.

She knew the prejudice we children faced. And she did what she could to protect us. The spell of the water frond that my mother taught me allowed my to disguise the only dead give-away in my appearance. Kagonesti, like the silver elves, have hazel eyes. My eyes are not hazel.

And if my master looked at me now, I was sure he would see it.

Sendrothalas brushed past me to pick up his ornate silver hand mirror. I scrambled to shake out his cloak.

"just leave," I prayed under my breath. I don't know, now, if I still harbored hope, in my heart of hearts, that I could convince him, cajole him, impress him into teaching me again. Dreams die hard, and I was young.

As well, I know I was on edge in the novelty of my surroundings, acutely aware how far from home I was. If Sendrothalas suspected my parentage, I had no doubt he would abandon me-or worse. Better to suffer the familiar evil of ridicule and disrespect than risk the terrible unknown. I kept my eyes down and waited for him to leave so that I could secure my disguise once more.

It seemed like an eternity that he examined his reflection, picking flecks of dust off his shirtsleeve, smoothing his hair. Finally, he snatched up the cloak.

"I've told you a dozen times, wash your hands before you handle my garments. I don't care to smell like a spice merchant."

I nodded, sullenly I'm sure.

"Look at me when I'm talking to you!"

My chin nearly against my chest, I raised my eyelids and peered up through my hair. He reached out and grasped my chin with his long, slender fingers.

Time lagged. Pungent nutmeg mixed with the subtle scent of wool and leather. I was sure I was discovered. But he was not looking at my eyes.

Sendrothalas' thumb slid slowly along my jawline. His gaze focused on my cheek, brown and turquoise under the milky paleness of his hand. I let my lids drift shut, sensing a new danger in his touch.

"Why you ruined your looks with these tattoos... Don't pout, I don't like it. In fact, I don't want you coming with me tonight at all. Finish the nutmeg, and I'll have the innkeep send up supper. Perhaps tomorrow we'll get you a pretty dress, and you'll forget all this nonsense about magic."

He thrust the mirror into my stiff hands.

I stared down into my own reflection, feeling the posses-

sive almost-caress on my cheek long after the echo of his footsteps faded from the stairs.

Tears finally washed the sting of spice from my turquoise eyes.

I had thought that coming to Sancrist was a challenge. I had thought I won, But I had not even imagined the dangers I was facing. Now it was clear I had lost everything.

I remembered the fate of the Arcane Component Analyzer, and my resolve firmed up. Perhaps not everything.

With new quickness to my movements, I returned the silver mirror to the chest top. In this new order, what had just minutes ago been unthinkable suddenly looked... almost desirable. My few belongings were already packed. I had left behind nothing in Silvamori that a little judicious gathering and a friendly plot of woods couldn't replace. The linen tunic, my uniform of servitude, I desperately wanted to abandon, but it would blend in, here in the city. I might not have time to make a new shirt for months.

On impulse, I scooped up a handful of the spice packets I had just finished sealing. Stealing, perhaps. Karthaian nutmeg was rare and expensive. While I was not learned enough to master the spell it was necessary for, there were some who would pay handsomely for such a treasure.

I also took the small, engraved-steel knife that Sendrothalas sometimes wore as an ornament. My own belt-knife of glass-stone was fine for skinning bunnies, but in Silvamori, as my mother bitterly foretold, I had been seduced by the sharpness and lasting edge of metal weapons.

I fingered the slim spellbook Sendrothalas had lent me. In the end, I took that, too. If no one would teach me magic, I was determined to teach myself. I had to master the vermin-summoning spell. Even if I had no hope of taking the Test now, still I would find some way to practice magic.

I clung to that thought, knowing in my heart it was hopeless.

I turned my attention to the room once more. Sendrothalas was likely to remain out all evening with his diplomatic acquaintance. That left me scant hours, however, to get out of the city and into the wilderness. I don't think I considered, then, how I was going to get off the island.

My main goal was to get lost.

I struck out across the city, and soon found a lively procession of gnomes who had packed up their booths and were heading back to their volcano home. The contraptions by which they traveled were almost more marvelous than the machines they had been selling. One cart belched steam as it rolled lurchingly along. Another flapped huge wings, whooshing gusts of breeze both ahead and behind. The wagon directly in front of the winged one seemed to be hoisting a sail, no doubt to take advantage of the breeze.

There were few ponies or other pack animals in evidence. I imagined beasts objected to machines' company.

It didn't take long for my longer legs and lighter burden to allow me to outdistance the bulk of the traffic. The city dwellings gave way to farmland abruptly, and then to familiar woods, I breathed deeply, inhaling the hay-scent of fern, the tang of pine. My footfalls were whispers in the wagon ruts of the road. After the racket of the city, I could once more thrill to the creak of crickets and the chitter of bats.

I wasn't thinking—I had exhausted thinking. I was just walking, letting my stride eat up the miles, when some inner alarm sounded. The woods were silent.

Too silent.

I had the little engraved knife in my hand even as the thought hit me. The four-inch blade looked pitifully small. The whisper of leather against leather, the muffled jingle of coins in a purse sounded loud behind me, now that I had wakened from my inattention. Two of them, maybe more. I dodged left, skip-hopped two steps, and bolted into a run between the tree trunks.

A male voice cursed and pounded after me. He was bigger, and he was gaining.

The thin light of crescent Solinari couldn't filter through the dense foliage-I headed deeper into the woods. Fortunately, my elven blood gave me the ability to see in the dark. My pursuer was not so lucky. He tripped on a log I leapt over, and sprawled his length in the brush. I slowed, then stopped. There had been two. Where was the other?

Hunkering behind a sharp-thorned berry bush, I looked for the reddish warmth that would be the other man. Something skittered at the corner of my eye. Diving the other way, I avoided the business end of a dagger by inches.

Perhaps the accomplice had elvensight, as well.

"Grawder, I've got her!" Dagger hollered, lunging again. He had the advantage of weapon length, I had to hope for maneuverability. I ducked, low and left, under his guard. My blade connected with flesh. Dagger grunted, but he didn't drop his weapon.

Breathing in sharply, I put all my weight behind my elbow. I caught Dagger in the ribs this time, knocking the wind out of him. His grip on the dagger loosened, finally; the slap of my off hand sent it spinning. It was out of my reach, but out of his as well.

Behind us, steel struck flint with a sharp crack, and the one called Grawder lit a torch. Light flared and shadows swooped as he swung the flame aloft. Dagger took advantage of my distraction to wrap his long fingers around my upper arm and pull me close. The stubble of his cheek rasped against my shoulder, the pointed tip of his ear showed through matted golden hair. My attacker was a half-human-like me.

"What have I got?" I wondered. Dagger's wheezing laugh showed I'd asked the question aloud.

"What's that Silvanesti pay you?" His grip tightened painfully.

Robbery? Plain robbery? I laughed myself, and if there was a hysterical note to the sound, Dagger didn't mention it.

"Come on, a lord like that, he has a fat purse."

They thought I was on a mission for my master! I didn't bother to deny it. Stomping hard on his instep, I pushed against him to force him off balance. We toppled together. My weight broke his grip. I kneed him in the stomach and took off running again.

I'd like to say that I didn't kill him because he too was half-human. We mixed breeds have it rough enough without holding race against each other. But the truth is, I was scared. Running seemed a better option.

Behind me I could hear Grawder charging through the forest. The torch slowed him considerably, catching on branches and throwing shadows that made him hesitate and startle. I slowed down, too, not enough for him to catch up, but enough to find my distance pace, the lope at which I could keep traveling for several hours.

I considered heading back to the road, and decided against it. I had no business in any village, and Sendrothalas might look for me there. No, if these woods were not the beloved

spruce and tree-fern of my home, they were at least woods. I had spent 66 years in the woods. They were family.

After a time, Grawder left off the chase, or I got too far ahead of him. My eyes readjusted to full darkness. The prickly feeling of being followed faded for a while, likely overwhelmed by my relief that I had gotten away with a few bruises and a long, shallow scratch. This last could have been thorn-cut. I had been lucky.

The more I pondered it, however, the more I wondered. Why had they fallen on me? The comment about Sendrothalas' wealth didn't ring true, but I had no alternative theories. I tried to reconstruct their faces, but the light had been bad, and my mind concerned more with the business of staying alive than the objectivity of cataloguing identities. I had only hazy impressions-the pointed ear, the stubble beard, the hard, rasping voice. Dagger I thought I might recognize. Grawder? I only knew that he was big.

As it neared moonset, the feeling of being followed surged again. By now, a certain recklessness gripped me. I was free. I had no master any more. If I had no hopes, at least I had no burdens. And I refused to run any further.

I had been heading uphill for the last mile or so. The canopy had thinned overhead, and the ground was rockier. Here and there, granite outcroppings muscled their way out of the forest floor. I climbed one of these, and flattened out on its crest, looking back into the deeper forest.

I didn't have long to wait.

Making no attempt to hide, the figure following me strolled along, whistling through its teeth sometimes, a glowing lamp of some kind in its hand. The other hand held a tall walking stick, forked on the top end. The light was smaller than a torch, and steadier. Every ten paces, the figure bent to the ground. Looking for scuff marks and turned stones, I had no doubt. Whoever it was, was tracking me.

I decided I didn't like being tracked. I replayed the earlier attack in my mind, envisioning myself, merciless, overwhelming the dagger-bearing half-human.

Silently, I nudged backward off the rock and over the crest of the hill. I circled back behind the whistling tracker. For a dark night in the deep woods, my tracker seemed little concerned with the possibility of actually catching up to me. As I snuck closer, I realized the figure was smaller in stature than either of my two previous attackers. A full length leather cloak brushed the boot-tops of its wearer, and puddled noiselessly when the tracker knelt to examine some sign. A marigold-colored cloak, I saw, as light spilled over the soft folds. I knew that cape.

I lunged forward, clamping one arm around the upper body of my follower, and grasping the cloak hood with my knife hand.

One tug revealed the kender woman.

"Millendria," I said, not quite a question.

The little kender woman I'd met on the port road to Gavin grinned even as her toes dangled two feet off the ground.

"Wow, you are strong! I'm really very impressed dearie, I had no idea you were that good at sneaking up on someone. But then, I guess woodcraft would be something you'd practice, if Kagonesti really are as wild as people say..!"

I put her down. "Millendria, what are you doing here? Why are you following me?"

"I thought you were lost!"

Had Sendrothalas noticed my absence so soon? Then I real-



ized the kender must have left the city at nearly the same time I had, to have caught up with me... or—

"How did you get here so fast?" I demanded. She stuck her lower lip out.

"Why, on horseback, of course. There's a shortcut past the Cave of Meskle—"

I cut her off again, impatient. "Where's your horse?"

"I have two, actually dearie, they were a matched pair, and I couldn't bear to split them up. And I got a good price from the gnome—"

"I don't care how good a price you got!" I roared.

She looked startled for a moment. But at least she stopped talking. We stood there in the forest, eyeing each other in the soft glow of Millendria's hand light. Then we both spoke at once.

"Are you sure you're not lost?"

"Who sent you after me?"

She shrugged, and gestured for me to speak. Her face was as open and innocent as a thirty-year-old's. It was hard to distrust such a friendly little countenance, but I knew nothing about her.

"I've been attacked once already tonight. I need to know why you think I'm lost!"

"Attacked! When? By who? You mean I missed it?" Her tone was... wistful, almost. As if she had missed an enjoyable opportunity. I told her there had been nothing enjoyable about it.

"It just seems so exciting. Did you kill them?"

"No, I didn't kill them. I don't even know what they were after." The fact that Millendria hadn't seen them confirmed they were no longer on my trail, for which I was grateful, and she, a little disappointed. That she might have been in league with them never crossed my mind, and still wouldn't.

I repeated my question.

Her eyes dropped away from mine, and her fingers fiddled with the drawstring of her hood.

"It's kind of embarrassing, dearie... See, most people have this very mistaken idea about kender—why, I can't tell you the number of times I've been spit on, whispered about—it can be very rude, and hugely uncomfortable... What I'm trying to say is that, well, like that elflord I saw you with yesterday, most people have the wrong idea. About kender. We are not thieves."

"What does thievery have to do with me? Do you think I stole something from you?"

"It's not you, dearie! I'm explaining badly—" The drawstring was looped around two fingers and she was chaining knots all along its length. "It's me. I don't steal things—"

"I never thought you did."

"—I *find* things!" Millendria said the words emphatically, as if they made everything clear.

"Find things," I repeated, still confused.

Nodding vigorously, she added, "Lost things!"

"Lost things."

A happy grin split her face. "Like you."

I felt thick as a stone. This was supposed to make things clearer? Maybe if I tried a different question.

"What do you do when you find them?"

"That's easy," she said cheerfully. "I give them back."

I couldn't help it, I took a step backward.

"I don't want to be given back." My voice sounded high and strangled to my own ears. I said it louder. "I won't go back."

"But if you're lost, dearie..."

"I am not lost!" She cringed, and I realized I was shouting, and gods knew who might be in earshot. I counted to ten. "I ran away."

Comprehension wreathed her face in smiles. "Oh, well, that's different. Ran away? How interesting. Ran away from what?"

Having no wish to provide a stationary target, I explained I'd had a disagreement with my master as we backtracked to Millendria's horses. She exclaimed several times about her foresight in taking both animals in the pair—"It was almost as if I knew I'd have company—but then, why didn't I get two saddles, if I knew that?"

Saddles I wasn't worried about—I'd ridden bareback all my life, on all sorts of mounts—ponies, deer, even an elk, once. When I cautioned her about the noise we were making (my father would be amazed I had paid attention to his lessons after all), she dismissed any danger.

Now, knowing kender in general, and Millendria in particular, much better, I wouldn't take her word for the safety of any potentially "interesting" situation. Getting kidnapped or set upon by wild animals is bound to generate excitement, and that's what kender like best.

But then, I was naive enough to consider her judgement expert in such matters. And in any event, we seemed alone in the woods. No one bothered us. My new kender friend chattered about her experiences, old friends, and whatever else crossed her mind until we camped at nearly dawn.

We broke fast over a little fire Millendria made the next twilight, eating the hard trail bread she carried, and washing it down with water from the stream we had camped beside.

"So where are you heading, dearie?"

"I don't care." I wanted my words to sound disinterested; I thought I did a fairly decent job of it. "Where are you going?"

"Well, I'm not sure myself. I'm following someone. Something, to be more precise."

"Something lost."

"You might say that, although the wizard used a less polite term for it."

"You work for a wizard?" Hope rose like a lark, and doubt rose right alongside. I could ask *him* to teach me—but would he laugh, as Sendrothalas had done? Of course he would laugh. Everyone laughed. Despair swamped me once again.

"Let's say I'm speculating. I've worked for almost anyone who's willing to pay. I've found things for dragons, lords and soldiers—why I actually found a needle in a haystack once!" Millie drew up to her tallest stature, and nodded emphatically. "I did. How was I to know it was hidden there to keep the knight's daughter from a bad marriage? Some people are just so unappreciative."

I soaked up the rose tint of twilight in the air, the babbling of the stream beside us, the deep scent of leaves and cool, brown earth. Millendria Gemgetter, with her childlike gaze and determined air, was my link to a new life. I threw out my dreams of magic, and focused on the here-and-now. I was a run-away on a small island. Sooner or later, if I stayed on San-crist, someone would find me. The two thugs, my former master... someone.

But if I went to Ansalon... Millie's non-stop tales of adventures and mishaps and monsters showed me that I could be something other than Sendrothalas' servant—and eventually, mistress. I shuddered, remembering that caress.

My father had tried to train me in weapons and woodcraft.

My mother had tutored me in druidic spells. What did I have to offer this woman that would convince her to take me with her?

"Millendria, what would you say to a partner? I could protect you..." my tone made it a question. Her moss-deep eyes were eager.

"Can you use a sword? There's something about a swordswoman—"

I was shaking my head. Lacking metal, my family had never manufactured long blades. "Mostly I know knives, slings... I'm a good shot with a bow..." Of course, I'd left mine in Silvamori. But I knew how to make one.

Her eagerness reflected my own. "Then I say, I thought you'd never ask, dearie."

Before we met the ship two days later, I replenished my herbs. I also made a new bow and cut ash saplings for arrow shafts. In a belt pouch I collected stones I could chip into arrowheads; I thought it might while away the time on board ship. I also snared a pair of rabbits and jerked the meat. Millie accepted half the bounty, although she insisted it was not payment for the trail bread she'd given me.

I couldn't keep from pulling out Sendrothalas's little spell book, like a sore tooth, and reading, over and over again the two spells I had learned. The words and gestures drummed in my mind, mocking. Millie, curiously, never caught me at it. I was grateful not to have to explain.

The port town of Xenos, near Mount Nevermind, is surrounded by mountains, and the one main street pitches sharply down to the dock. We led our mounts into town just after dawn. Millie had started another tale in her innumerable collection of exploits, but I had stopped listening, being fascinated instead by the new town. A stiff breeze brought the salt tang of seawater to our noses, and lifted up the voices of the men loading the ship.

"So I thought, dearie, that he meant to put the knife in the table—" the kender continued happily.

"—not here, or maybe heading to Mount Nevermind after—"

I recognized that voice! Whirling, I looked for the half-elf I had called Dagger, sure he was at my shoulder. No one there. Millie chatted on, obviously. My eyes scanned the smattering of people on the dock below as my hand went to my little knife.

And I saw them. A big man who must be Grawder stood turned toward the ships tied up at dockside. His companion, a tall, narrow fellow with a light beard, and tangled golden hair worn long over his ears, gestured at the shore.

"Millie, hush a minute!" I scrunched down behind the horse.

The kender woman looked back at me in surprise.

"What are you—"

"The men who attacked me. They're here!"

She swung around expectantly. "Where?"

"Don't look!"

She turned back to face me. "But how am I going to see them if I don't look?"

"I don't want them to see me, and you'll draw attention, staring! There're two of them, down at the dock. Big guy, leather armor. And the thin blond with the bow."

"How do you know it's them if you saw them in the dark—"

"I recognize the voices." I had turned my horse into one of the side alleys that crossed the main street. Millie followed me after a moment, still craning her neck to see the men.



"We can't go on the ship."

"Sure we can—all we need to do is get past them, dearie. We'll dress you in one of my..." Her suggestion subsided at my glare. I was five and a half feet tall, while Millie stood maybe three and a half feet in her boots. None of her clothing had a prayer of fitting me.

"And how do you expect to disguise these?" I continued, rubbing the fine turquoise-green tattoos tracing my forearm.

"Did they see them? It was dark," she pointed out kindly.

"I saw *his* pointy little ear-of course they saw them!"

"Your sleeves roll down."

"Not far enough. We can't do it."

"The trouble with you is, you give up too easily." The kender pursed her lips in thought. "Never say can't. I think I might have an idea."

When I approached the dock a little later, I had my disguise. Dirt, rubbed into the skin on my hands and cheeks, covered up most of the tattoos, and changed my complexion to a dull ochre. Millie had made me take down my braids, and my hair hung like a cape around me, wavy brown tresses almost to my knees. I doubted the men would recognize me. But to make sure they weren't looking closely, Millie set up a diversion.

"There's a tax now, on passage to Solamnia?" Everyone in town could probably hear her piercing voice. Millie poked one brown finger at the unsuspecting dockmaster, the man my attackers had been consulting moments previous. I saw both of them look around from their casual poses. I forced myself to walk slowly past, murmuring to the horses.

"I may be a doorknob of a kender to you, but my mother

didn't raise any stupid children. You must have ogre snot for brains!"

As Millendria got wound up, more and more people drifted her way to see what the excitement was about. Grawder and Dagger were thick in the center of the crowd. It was working.

The gangplank of the *Chislev's Whisper* was wide enough for the horses, but they balked at the slap and chuckle of the waves. I searched my pack for something to tie across their eyes, fretting at the delay. Muttering I'd cut off their oats for a week, I finally settled on a long sleeved shirt. I'd have to take one up, untie the blindfold, and come back for the other. Millie was still cursing out the dockmaster very inventively at the top of her lungs.

I ground-hitched my mount, and worked on Millie's first.

Or started to.

"Looks like you could use a hand," Dagger's raspy voice offered. He grabbed a fistful of hair, and hauled me around to face him. Tears sprang to my eyes; I could feel my hair lifting from my scalp with the force of his grip. I came with my knife in my hand, but he caught my wrist easily, almost casually.

"It's expensive, going to healers all the time. I wish you wouldn't do that."

"Let me go," I gritted.

He smiled; it wasn't a pleasant expression. "Okay, so you didn't buy the highwaymen disguise. So I'll put it to you straight. Give me back the book, and I won't hurt you."

"The book?" Sendrothalas' book? Sendrothalas had sent them?

"The spellbook you stole. It's valuable. He wants it back." With supreme indifference, he dropped my knife hand to rummage in my backpack. My off hand clawed to free his grip on my hair. Pain seared the back of my head as I swung wildly behind me with the knife. I could feel the blow connect-and bounce back harmlessly. I swung again. Same result. A thump against my calf and an accompanying clatter sounded as Dagger flung items from my pack to the dock.

Furious, I jabbed backward with all my strength. Maybe more force was necessary. The result was not what I had hoped. My slim steel blade snapped, leaving a scant two inches of edge.

Now I realized it had to be some spell of protection I had no hope of breaching, that he would knowingly leave me armed. Blood roared in my ears. I had to do something, fast.

The strain on my neck from his grip was beginning to tell. I swung again, only this time, I didn't aim for his body. Using my skull as a guide, I sliced through the hank of hair.

He hadn't anticipated that. Concentrating as he was on the book, Dagger wasn't prepared for the abrupt loss of resistance to his hold. He stumbled backward, still gripping my now unattached tresses, and fetched up against the rump of Millie's horse.

Without waiting to see the outcome of that encounter, I dropped low, and scrambled the other way. More belongings spilled as his other arm was wrenched out of my pack. I kept going, the spellbook banging comfortingly against my ribs every other step.

"Grawder!" Dagger bellowed.

The dock made an elbow, and the *Chislev's Whisper* had tied up near the bend. To my embarrassment, I realized I had headed out on the dead end, and not back toward shore. Worse, Grawder was helping Dagger to his feet. About twenty five yards separated us.

And my precious metal knife was nearly useless.

The sea water was a foam-scummed green roiling around the pilings ten feet below. Nothing I'd willingly dive into. Gasping from exertion and panic, I sucked in huge breaths of air, the spellbook pressing against my ribs with each intake.

Magic. I could use my magic to defend myself. Fumbling in my belt pouch, I withdrew a scrap of pork rind. Grawder and Dagger were moving forward, not too fast, because to them, too, I was trapped. I wondered if Sendrothalas had mentioned that *this* Kagonesti could work magic, and decided that they wouldn't have believed him, anyway.

Closing my eyes briefly, I focused on the words burned into my brain. Calm descended in me. I looked at them, my attackers, and I felt a leap of—ecstasy, I have to call it. I felt power surge in me. I think Dagger saw it; he lunged forward. I spoke the few, ancient words, my arms upraised. And suddenly, the raw planks of the dock in front of me were as slippery as a greased pig. Dagger's feet flew out from under him, and he dove forward onto his chin. The big man, Grawder, overbalanced when he tried to avoid his companion. His arms windmilled backward, his feet slid into Dagger, and they both shot sideways-into the drink below.

"Brava, brava!" crowed Millie, suddenly there on the dock, hopping up and down in delight. "Why didn't you tell me you knew magic? Hit 'em with a lightning bolt, I always say! Now let's get out of here!"

There was one more thing I had to do. My two attackers had surfaced, splashing madly in the scummy water. Pulling the slim spellbook from my tunic, I flipped to the back page for the first time. It looked blank, but I fingered the crystal I carried, and spoke a word. A magical inscription darkened into visibility.

*"Know that this is the property of Sendrothalas, House Orator, and that I have marked it with a spell of location. Return my property, or suffer my displeasure."*

The flowery tone and self-conscious script spoke of a very young writer. I guessed that my former master had been no older than I was now when he enspelled the book. I thumbed lightly back through several pages, but saw no sign of similar inscriptions.

Well, this was how my attackers had found me. But had he marked the whole book, or only the last page?

I ripped the sheet from its binding. No thunderclap sounded, no missile struck me.

I tucked the book back into my tunic, and dropped the one fluttering page off the dock. Dagger thrashed to catch it.

I backed up a pace. Aiming for the middle of the span, I ran forward, and slid all the way to the gangplank. Millie started to offer me a hand up, and then thought better of it. Of course, the grease would disappear when the spell wore off.

"That was just amazing, dearie. I mean, I thought my distraction was working until I heard that bellow."

"You remember you asked where I wanted to go?" I interrupted. "Well, I changed my mind." The crew was casting off. Our horses whinnied as if to say goodbye to solid ground. (Millie told me later that Dagger's stumbling into them was just the ticket-they bolted up the gangplank all by themselves. Kicked him, too, in the bargain. I was sorry I missed it.)

"Where, dearie?"

"The Tower of High Sorcery." I whispered the name. My brothers had laughed at my reading, calling me a book-moth, taunting me for my lack of woodsmanship. Sendrothalas had



teased me for the opposite reason, saying I was too stupid to learn, clever only in the way a raccoon is clever.

But I had proved him wrong. Even now, the thrill of power faded, but I had felt it. I truly did. They would not laugh at me at the Tower.

Would they?

Millie chirping voice snapped me back to the present. "Which one? There are five-or were, since most are just ruins now-"

I was nonplussed. "The one where they give the Test."

"You mean Wayreth?" Millendria asked, frowning heavily.

I didn't recognize the name, then. "I want to take the Test!"

"Well, your teacher will take you to..." Her assuring tone dwindled into the creak of the rigging. "He's that elf you're running away from. Oh, dear!" She knew as well as I that magic, of all things, could not be self-taught. Was I desperate enough to try?

Determination hardened my heart and squeezed the breath from my lungs. "I want to find the Tower and take the Test."

The steep coast of northern Sancrist fell away from our vessel faster and faster as the sailors sang in rhythm to the hoisting sail. Tiny figures swarmed over the dock behind us.

The kender's rapidly churning expressions were almost comical. Worry, doubt, excitement and concern chased across her mobile features. Eventually, she settled on a condescending heartiness. "Oho, dearie, you don't find the Tower, the Tower finds you. Least, that's how I heard it, and from a very reliable source," She paused, then delivered the clincher. "Not even I could find the Tower of Wayreth."

My disappointment must have been as obvious as my tattoos. Millie dove into her backpack, her voice muffled by the cloth.

"I think magic is so fascinating-did I show you the lamp I have? I found an herb for a red-robe one time, he had been looking high and low. Something he needed for a very important spell, only I don't remember exactly what it was supposed to do. Anyway..." As she spoke, the kender took out the fist-sized glass globe she'd been carrying last night. I wondered if this was another of her distractions, and she was practicing on me. I tried to look interested.

There wasn't anything inside. She rubbed her brown fingers over the surface of the glass, turning the ball around faster and faster. It started to glow.

"It's not as interesting as the staff he had-that staff did all sorts of things! And I was kind of hoping that there would be a word I had to say. Like when he said a word, the gem on his staff would light up! But this is almost as good."

The globe was now glowing as it had when I first saw it. Magic. What I craved to learn. The kender woman gazed fondly into its depths and sighed.

"You really want to find it, don't you?" Her normally animated face was subdued.

"I need to find it."

We stared at each other, I don't know how long.

"Oh, all right. I always said, there's nothing you can hide from this kender forever. Sooner or later, I'll find it."

I hugged her until she protested she couldn't breathe.

"There's only one condition," Millie huffed, straightening out her vest. "We find that ring I'm looking for first."

## Northern Ergoth

**Culture:** The once-mighty empire of Ergoth has decayed and fragmented into a mixed society of humans beset by ogres, goblins, gully dwarves, and slig. Ergoth is still the language of the majority. However, many speak Common, Goblin, and/or Solamnic as well. Small populations represent half a dozen other tongues: Minotaur, Kenderspeak, Ogre, Slig, Kyrie, even Naga.

**Geography:** West of mainland Ansalon stands the island of Northern Ergoth. A mountain range runs from the northwest to the southeast corner of the isle. The western section is Ergoth proper, which consists of grassy plains backed up against the mountains. The eastern section is the Kender nation of Hylo, which boasts a splendid wood with a wide variety of food and medicinal plants. The southern edge of the island contains a hilly desert of scrub and sage. Neither the kender nor the humans lay claim to this wasteland.

**Climate:** Northern Ergoth enjoys relatively mild summers that last 4 months from Corij to Reorxmont and winters that extend the corresponding 4 months from Phoenix to Chislom. Currents from the Southern Sirrion Sea cool the island during the summer and help to moderate the freezing effects of winter. The sea also makes for humid air, which brings heavy vernal thundershowers and thick snows. Except the south, which is removed from the ocean's breezes, the land is green and lush.

**Politics:** Northern Ergoth is ruled by Emperor Mercador, his title reminiscent of the lost glory of Ergoth. Many ruins of that ancient empire lie on the island or beneath the seas. The current emoeor wants these ruins explored and the riches



regained. The emperor thus sponsors adventurers' forays into ruined areas, with strict regulations as to what finds adventurers may keep.

In addition, Emperor Mercador pursues a treaty with the Qualinesti, hoping to outflank Southern Ergoth both militarily and economically. The eventual goal of Northern Ergoth is to rebuild its glory, whether by treaty or war.

**Trade:** Northern Ergoth specializes in copper, brass, steel tools, relics, and cut stone, trading these items with Solamnia, Sancrist, and Hylo. In return, they import food from Solamnia, precious metals from Sancrist, wooden carvings from Hylo, and fruits and leather from Qualinesti.

KENDERHOME (hylo)

**Culture:** Hylo is the only major city in Kenderhome, and often the term is used to name the country as well. Kender are not by any means the only population in this land, as that would be boring. Kenderhome also boasts significant numbers of ogres, goblins, and the avian kyrie. Kenderspeak, Common, and the human tongues of Solamnic and Ergot are commonly spoken, though of course Ogre, Goblin and Kyrie are also heard among their natives. Because of kender political aspirations—and curiosity—Gnomish is on the rise. The kender like to call their chaotic government an omnigarchy.

**Geography:** A forest blankets the northeastern edge of the island of Northern Ergoth. Here, the kender dwell. The Cataclysm not only destroyed the five other kender cities once thriving in this area, but also made the wilderness village of Hylo into a port town.

Kenderhome is well guarded. The Straits of Algoni and friendly Solamnia stand to the east while a vast range of mountains borders the west. The lands below Kenderhome are inhospitable desert and the lands above are empty wastes.

**Climate:** A mere 150 miles farther north than the kender nation of Goodlund, Kenderhome enjoys a far cooler climate. In the summer months the heat rarely reaches sweating point, especially beneath the swaying trees of the forest. Cool breezes roll down from mountains, further moderating temperatures. A four-month winter brings frequent and good-packing snow.

**Politics:** Despite the childlike playfulness that characterizes kender, Kenderhome currently pursues an alliance with the gnomes. Of course, matters of state interest neither party as much as a whirling gadget does. Perhaps the stalled talks are a blessing: the thought of the mighty gnomish infantry at one's back would disconcert even the most courageous kender. On the other hand, Northern Ergoth would probably hesitate to war with the kender on one flank and their allies the gnomes on the other.

**Trade:** Kendermore produces exquisitely carved wooden objects that, together with flint and ebony, provide Kenderhome a thriving trade with Sancrist, Northern Ergoth, and Solamnia. The kender import metals from the first two trading partners and wheat from the latter. Finally, kender also trade a service: that of serving as a “finder.” Kender frequently hire themselves out to locate missing persons or objects. Their barter in no way reflects the success of the “finding quest.”



## Southern Ergoth

**Culture:** A lot of different cultures have packed onto the is land of Southern Ergoth, and the pressures there are rising. Three cities—Daltigoth, Qualimori, Silvamori—serve as capitals of political and social power. Daltigoth cowers under an ogre dictator, Qualimori is the refugee city of Qualinesti elves, and Silvamori is the seat in exile of the Silvanesti elves. In addition, the Knights of Solamnia man an outpost here, and major tribal populations of Kagonesti elves and goblins haunt the woods.

In sheer numbers, Ergot wins as the dominant language, but each elven tongue is well represented, as are Common, Qare, and Solamnic.

**Geography:** The northernmost half of Southern Ergoth consists of a large and desolate plain. Aside from dwindling goblin tribes, no notable cultures exist upon this end of the island. The scrubby land cannot support large populations. The deep Morgash Bay (or Bay of Darkness) lies directly south of this region. The port city of Daltigoth stands on the southern shore of Morgash Bay, the single settlement worthy of note in the north. Once the proud capital of the Ergothian Empire, Daltigoth has fallen to ogres. West of Daltigoth lie the spine-like Mountains of Ergoth. The center of these mountains harbors Foghaven Vale, where lies the tomb of Huma, hero of the Third Dragon War.

West and south of the Mountains of Ergoth, open plains and venerable forests lead to the Sirrion Sea. Here, the seeds of a grand civilization have been planted. Silvanesti elves, fleeing their embattled homeland, founded Silvamori, while Qualinesti refugees founded Qualimori. Each encampment

displaced some of the native Kagonesti natives. Silvamori and Qualimori stand only 20 miles apart, separated by the river Thon-Tsalarian (River of the Dead). Following the habits of their homelands, the refugee elves created new settlements that work in tune with nature.

**Climate:** Southern Ergoth's weather tends to be harsh and unpredictable. Storms upon the Sirrion Sea often sweep inland across the southern and western coasts of the islands. During a thunderous spring that begins in Chismont, cyclones occasionally spawn west of Sancrist and come crashing southward. All lands west of the Ergoth Mountains tend, therefore, to have wet springs and summers. The mountains block the advance of rain and storm alike from the north of the isle, leaving it a dry and desolate grassland. Summer heat lasts four months and rarely reaches sweat-inducing levels. Winter brings blizzards to the west and biting winds to the northern plains.

**Politics:** Despite the nation's human name, Southern Ergoth's chief inhabitants are not human. The ogres inhabiting Daltigoth do so in mockery of ancient Ergoth: Ergoth was founded by human slaves who rebelled against their ogre masters.

West of the mountains, the Qualinesti, Kagonesti, and Silvanesti elves slowly work out a truce. Although centuries of antagonism among the races threatens to keep the clans apart, the mere proximity of their settlements has begun to dissolve the animosity. Indeed, young elves feel they have the chance to found a new homeland for all elves, a nation that can reclaim the ancient birthright of their ancient species. These idealists rally around one hope: forming a sovereign elven state free of domination from Northern Ergoth and even Qualinesti. The leaders currently pursue a treaty with Qualinesti that treats the nations as equals.

**Trade:** The nascent elven nation engages in little trade, for the land provides most ordinary needs. Some homesick folk in Qualimori do purchase Qualinesti peaches, apples, pears, and leather. The Silvamori are more likely to buy metal, books, and grain from Solamnia. The Kagonesti trade chiefly in fish, fur, and grains. Both the wild ogres of Thunderbane's clan and the Daltigoth ogres trade in herbs, spices, fruits, and fish.

### Silvart of the Kagonesti



Silvart has a voice like dancing waters: bubbling and melodious. She works as servant to the Silvanesti and is usually dirt-caked and savage-looking. When cleaned and combed, however, Silvart is a great beauty. She is dedicated to freeing her people and will be a loyal friend to those who aid her in this cause. If met while spying for her people, Silvart seems dull and able to perform only the simplest, most tedious tasks. However, when she has befriended a group, she shows herself to be insightful and extremely knowledgeable in the ways of the forests.

Silvart descended from a line of wise women, as evidenced by her pale skin and white hair. She took service among the Silvanesti invaders to spy upon them for her people. Her only companion is her dog Dargo, a snow-white cooshee.

Some speculate that Silvart is the alternate identity for Silvara, the Great Silver Dragon who fell in love with the elf-prince Gilthanas.

### Solostaran, Speaker of the Suns



Solostaran has a diplomat's voice: calm, reasonable, and steely. He is a gracious man of advancing years, who, if he shares the prejudices of his people, does not voice such opinions. He has led his people for more years than most humans have been alive and is therefore accustomed to being obeyed. Solostaran projects an aura that makes all those around him naturally obey in times of crisis.

He does not enter lightly into any conflict. The Qualinesti are his to protect as well as to command. He realizes that regardless who wins a battle, everyone loses. Solostaran will not risk the life of even a single subject until he is convinced that such a risk is necessary.

Solostaran came to power much as his son Porthios is now assuming control of the nation: following a long period of training and seasoning. He is, therefore, not given to rash or ill-advised use of his power. He is proud of his sons and the job he did in raising them. His daughter, Laurana, gave him much sorrow when she rebelled against him, leaving Qualinesti to chase after the half-elf Tanis.

### Porthios

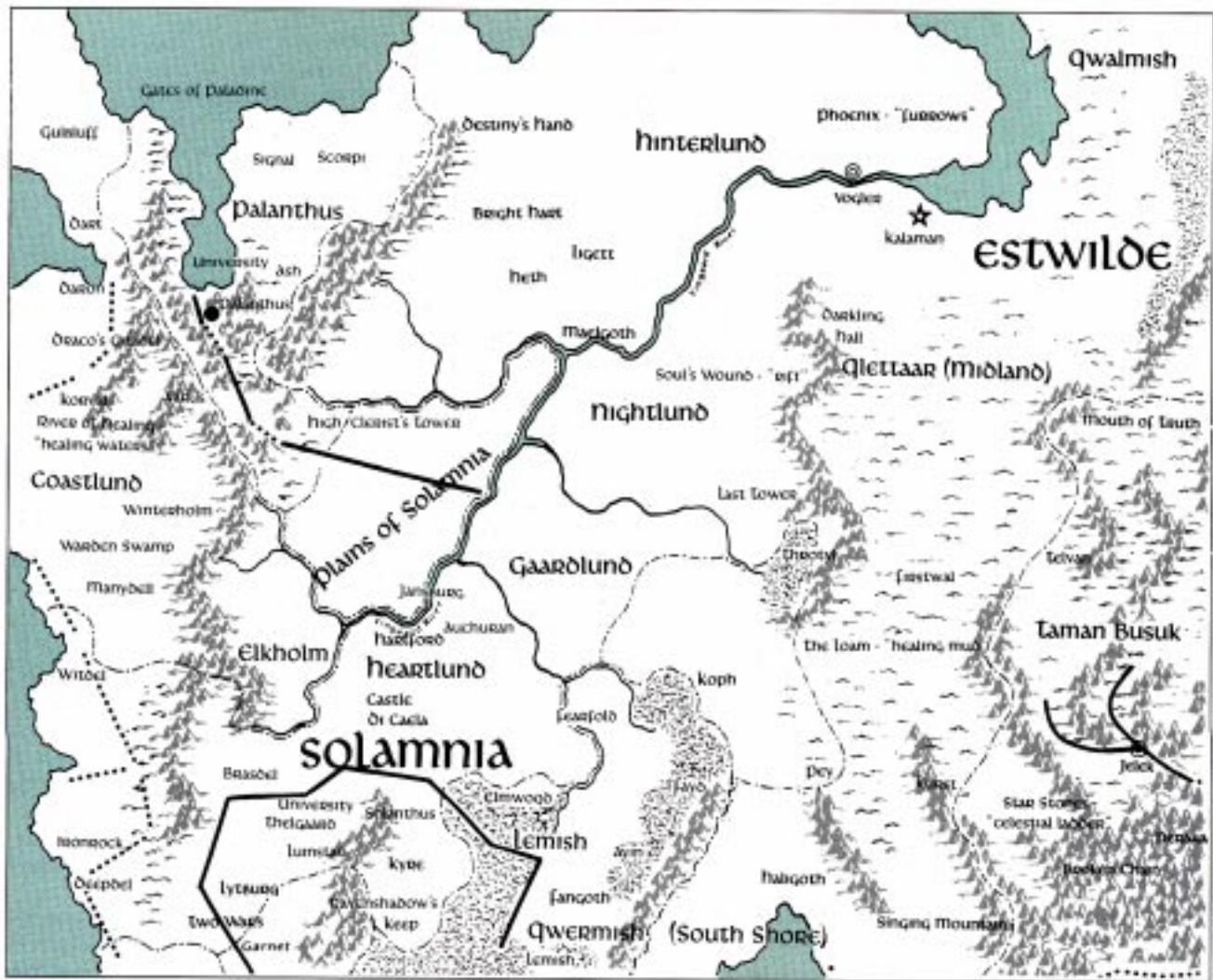


Porthios, heir of the Speaker of the Suns, has a slow, methodical, and succinct manner when speaking. He appears to weigh every word before releasing it. Porthios's main fault is his pride, which is considerable—and stiff-necked. Still, he truly cares for his people, the Qualinesti, and will make an excellent leader when the time comes.

All of Porthios's decisions, in battle and otherwise, will be made with the welfare of the Qualinesti folk uppermost in mind. He does care about other races, but feels that the Qualinesti should be his first concern. He will place matters of state above even his own life.

Porthios is the eldest child of the Speaker of the Suns. It was known from his birth that he would rule. His whole life has been spent in training for rulership. He resents the attention that his brother, Gilthanas, receives for his adventuring, feeling that Gilthanas's true responsibilities lie at home. He has also lost respect for his sister, Laurana, for running off in a time of crisis to follow the half-elf, Tanis. Porthios stayed home to support their father in his illness and later led his people to safety in Southern Ergoth. He feels underappreciated for it.





## Solamnia

**Culture:** While humans make up the vast majority of Solamnia's residents, and the whole nation is ruled by one parliament, the area is so large and the geography so varied that regional differences are rife. Palanthus is the capital city. Solamnic is almost universally spoken, but trade and visitors make Common, Lemish, Plains Barbarian, and Mountain Dwarf commonly recognized. The War of the Lance has made Draconian unfortunately all too common. It is possible to find, in small enclaves, native speakers of Goblin, Ogre, and of course Kenderspeak.

**Geography:** The largest and most geographically varied nation of Ansalon is Solamnia. From its sandy deserts on the Northern Sirrion Sea to the dark and stormy plains off the Straits of Schallsea, Solamnia spans 500 miles of northern Ansalon. It boasts three mountain ranges (Vingaard, Dargaard, and Garnet), the longest river in Ansalon (the Vingaard), the most fertile river basin (the Plains of Solamnia), and the center of learning, theology, and writing for the continent (Palanthus).

Before the Cataclysm, Solamnia was a largely land-locked state. The land shifts that occurred with the Cataclysm set seas on three sides of the nation. Now, the cities of Caergoth, Palanthus, and Kalamman are among the foremost shipbuild-

ing sites in the world.

The northwestern region of Solamnia contains the vast and rugged Vingaard Mountains. Here lies Palanthus, a safe, deep harbor in the Bay of Branchala. These mountains also house the High Clerist's Tower, the central site for the Knights of the Sword. A high road leads from Palanthus past the tower and down to Vingaard Keep, which guards the Vingaard River. The broad and verdant river basin around this keep produces enough grain and meat to feed the entire continent of Ansalon.

South of the Plains of Solamnia stand the Garnet Mountains. The Solamnians granted this province to the Thorbardin dwarves (for more information on this region, see "Kayolin").

**Climate:** Solamnia lies squarely within a band of temperate weather. Of course, the sheer size of the land and variety of terrain guarantee differences in climate. The sandy desert in the north experiences long summers and no identifiable winter. Ocean currents bear moisture away from northern Solamnia and toward the Peninsula of Nordmaar.

Palanthus, some 150 miles south, experiences the full range of seasons, with a long, hot six-month summer from Chismont to Hiddumont and a snowy, three-month winter. Even so, Palanthus and the Vingaard Mountains receive less rain and snow than the lush seaboard of Coastlünd to the west.

The Vingaard River valley enjoys the most advantageous weather on the continent. A three-month summer beginning in Corij provides ample rainfall and hot weather perfect for farming. A three-month winter beginning in Phoenix allows fields and farmers rest time between crops. Spring and autumn are times of planting festivals and harvest festivals, respectively. Besides producing healthy plants, the plains produce healthy and happy people—strong and idealistic stock from whom the Knights of Solamnia are drawn.

The winters in Southlund and Garnet tend to be more extreme. The rough waters off Cape Caergoth bring cold tides from the Southern Sirrion Sea. The shorelands of Southlund are covered with wind-blasted moors that hold great stores of water. The folk of Southlund are similar to the moor grass—strong, sinewy, and deeply rooted to the land.

### Lord Soth, The Knight of the Black Rose



A death knight, Lord Soth speaks with a hollow, chilling voice. His demeanor is terrifying, even to kender. Soth fights according to the rules of chivalry, dismounting to fight a man afoot, sheathing his sword to fight one who is unarmed, and so forth. These gestures are bald-

facéd mockeries, for the death knight's awesome powers make these concessions worthless.

Lord Soth, for most of his life, was considered a good and honorable knight, nearly a paragon of virtue. He was, however, a man of strong passions; these passions proved his downfall. Soth craved an heir, but his wife was barren. Then, one day, he laid eyes upon an elf maiden, a disciple of the Kingpriest of Istar. He committed adultery with her and later, when he found that she was pregnant, participated in the murder of his wife so that he might marry the elf woman. Soth's crimes came to light and he suffered disgrace and condemnation.

When his new wife found out what had happened, she prayed to Mishakal that he be given a chance at redemption. Soth himself prayed to Paladine, and the two gods answered them. Soth was given the power to prevent the Cataclysm—although it would cost him his life. Soth set out to accomplish this task. However, he was waylaid by elven women who planted lies in his heart, claiming his wife was unfaithful. Abandoning his quest, he returned to his keep at Dargaard to confront her. The Cataclysm occurred and Soth's wife and heir burned to death before his eyes.

Soth sat down in the great hall of his keep, seared by the roaring flames. He waited for death. But death never came. He was transformed into a death knight. His retainers turned into skeletal warriors to serve him and the elven women who triggered his damnation became banshees, keening his crimes every night in the halls of Dargaard.

Soth's torment continued through the centuries until the Blue Lady came to Dargaard. She offered Soth the elf maiden Laurana for his bride if he would join with the dragonarmies. At first, Soth saw his lost bride in Laurana and believed her to be his chance at release from undeath. Later, he turned his desires to the Blue Lady and plotted her downfall so that she could rule beside him in undeath forever.

Because of his attachment to the Blue Lady, Soth may be encountered in other locations than his haunted castle.

### Astinus of Palanthus



Astinus speaks in a hushed voice that nevertheless carries a feeling of great strength. He is often too busy recording history as it is being made to speak with people; only a lucky few find themselves in his presence.

Astinus is always polite, but can be somewhat distant. Those who interrupt his studies see his irritable side. Astinus is reticent and sparing with his advice, often simply restating the obvious and inviting questioners to rethink their own conclusions.

Astinus's past (and indeed, his present) is vague: no living person knows when he first appeared in Palanthus. Some folk explain his seeming omniscience and agelessness by saying that he is the incarnation of the god Glean, or perhaps Zivilyn (the Tree of Life, which is said to have a branch in every plane).

The historian has no friends or associates as such and remains aloof from the mundane matters of life. In fact, he is not known to leave his Library in Palanthas.

### Crysanía



Crysanía, who holds the clerical title Revered Daughter of Paladine, has a full, rich voice that captivates those to whom she speaks. She has converted many to her faith with the power of her voice alone. She is truly dedicated to Paladine. Her first and only love is the church. She is pleasant, cultured, and extremely well-educated.

Crysanía is devout but ambitious. She feels that she has the strength and ability to lead the church when the cleric Elistan is gone. Although this is true, Crysanía needs to learn compassion, tolerance, and humility in her office. Otherwise she will end up following the path of the Kingpriest.

Crysanía is the daughter of an ancient noble family of Palanthus. She could have had her pick of husbands, not only because of her charm and beauty, but also because of her family fortune. Crysanía wanted more from life than just raising children and running a household. She always felt that a greater destiny awaited her and she became frustrated when she could not find her calling. When she met Elistan, she found her destiny. She was among his first converts, and immediately left her family and wealth to dedicate her life to the church.

**Politics:** Solamnia has emerged from the War of the Lance as Ansalon's dominant nation. Palanthus is the busiest port on the continent, home to, among others, a Tower of High Sorcery, the world's largest and most important library, the Temple of Paladine (which houses the Disks of Mishakal), and the headquarters of the Knights of Solamnia.

Solamnia and its knights have regained their reputation for justice and honor due to the heroism of Sturm Brightblade and his companions. This has helped Solamnia establish alliances with Silvanesti, Thorbardin, Sancrist, and Hylo. The nation has quickly become the "city guard" of Ansalon. In addition to patrolling the continent, Solamnia works to consolidate its provinces and rebuild its war-damaged lands. Then, the nation can turn full attention to ridding Ansalon of the Dragonarmies.

Because of Solamnia's sheer size, summary statements of its political nature cannot adequately describe the area. Issues in Solamnia's major locations follow.

**Caergoth:** The capital city of Southlund is a port town known for its excellent shipwrights and sailors. Most of Southlund's citizens harvest the sea as fisher folk or harvest the land as farmers. Centuries of plowing fields from the ironlike heath grass has tempered a hearty, pragmatic folk. Their loyalty and innate honesty make them excellent knights and, in fact, Caergoth is a major stronghold of the Knights of Solamnia.

**Garnet:** This dwarven province considers itself a sovereign nation, but remains strongly loyal to Solamnia. Currently, the governor of Garnet works with Solamnia and the three knighthoods to prepare an invasion from Garnet into the evil neighboring nation of Lemish.

**Dargaard:** This area guarded eastern Solamnia from the nomads of Estwilde until its ruler, Knight of the Rose Lord Soth, fell to pride and lust. Before the Cataclysm, this region was called Knightlund because of its noble lord. Now, it is called Nightlund because of the darkness brought to the land by the death knight.

**Kalaman:** The northeastern jewel of Solamnia, the port town of Kalaman was splintered by the Red Dragonarmy during the War. Even now, the dragons occupy eastern areas of the city. Elite units of human soldiers, many of them Solamnic Knights, desperately hold the front.

**Palanthus:** Palanthus is a city swept up in religious revival. Temples to each of the gods of Good are under construction and each god's clerical hierarchy maintains headquarters in the city. Along with knowledge of the true gods comes knowledge of all things: young students and old scholars the world over flock to Palanthus to study.

**Solanthus:** During the darkest hour of the war, Solanthus fell. Eventually, the heroes levered the Blue Dragonarmy from its foothold in the town and pressed them into retreat, but still the foul beasts burned farmlands and towns as they withdrew. The local government of Solanthus seeks adventurers to flush out and destroy any remaining pockets of Blue Dragonarmy resistance. Solanthus also provides generous land grants to carpenters, masons, and farmers in hopes of rebuilding.

**Vingaard:** When Vingaard was liberated from the forces of Evil, the city began a rapid recovery. Still, Vingaard needs hard-working laborers to repair damage to the fortress and town. Furthermore, many ruin sites were uncovered by the occupying armies, and no human has yet had a chance to explore them.

**Trade:** The sprawling nation of Solamnia has much to offer: ships, timber, and beer from Caergoth; ships and navigators from Kalaman; gems, iron, and steel from the dwarven province of Kayolin; ships, books, beer, ale, and textiles from Palanthus; grain and cattle from Solanthus; and horses and cattle from Vingaard. Even in the midst of such bounty, Solamnia requires many materials to rebuild Kalaman, Solanthus, and Vingaard after the ravages of war. Lumber, bricks, blocks, thatch, tiles, pitch, mortar, iron, steel, glass, and so forth bring high prices because the demand for them is great. For these items, Solamnia turns first to its major trading partners: Nordmaar, the Ergoths, Sancrist, and Qualinesti.

The captain came to see us once both sails were hoisted.

"I can do with a little less excitement getting underway, Millendria Gemgetter. And I don't care to be on the receiving end of a tongue-lashing such as you gave Dockmaster Bren—even if it is in jest. Now introduce me to my second passenger." He turned to me, and I straightened uncomfortably, pushing my streaming hair back from my face, and rubbing at my dirt-streaked skin.

Tall and powerfully muscled, he was the first man I had met with darker skin than mine. My natural walnut tones seemed pale against his weathered ebony sinews. His eyes were rich, brown velvet, and his teeth, when he smiled, a slash of white.

"Abbra Jehanni," I murmured, my eyes automatically turning down.

"None of that on my ship," he laughed. "If you're hard-working and loyal, *Chislev's* Whisper doesn't care where you came from, or what rank you used to be. Buccaneers, slaves, or princes, you're all the same to the sea."

"Abbra's my new partner," Millie piped up. Oddly, she didn't seem inclined to babble on as she might usually have. The captain's dark eyes held my hazel gaze assessingly.

"I can see that. And a mage to boot?"

"I'm just beginning training," I demurred, aware that even that was a bit of overstatement.

"Can you blow us a breeze to help us on our way, or throw fireballs to chase off the pirates?"

I shook my head reluctantly. "The only defensive spell I know is the one I just did. Are we likely to see pirates?"

"Aye, they're a hazard we sometimes face. A little magic to use against 'em I wouldn't mind. But we'll welcome you even without!" He turned to the first mate, and instructed a spare canvas be rigged to offer shade for the horses. Our interview was over.

I still felt cramped by the weight of the sky, but this passage was better than my first. The horizon grew less and less menacing. If I still saw the distant smudges of land as caught between the jaws of sea and air, at least they-and we-seemed in less danger of being swallowed.

Our days settled into monotony, sung to the tune of creaking ropes and crying gulls. My scalp healed. I debated cutting off the rest of my hair, but once I rebraided it, the shorn patch barely showed.

Millie suffered the most from the tedium, searching every cranny of the cargo holds for 'interesting stuff' and pestering the crew about their various tasks until she was confined, by the captain's orders, to the rear deck. I didn't mind keeping her company. As I chipped my arrowpoints, Millie told me the story of the ring she was engaged to find.

"It's a ring of healing, dearie, which I think sounds very handy to have. I'm surprised he could have been so careless as to have lost it. But there was a lady involved," she shook her head, "and you know how stupid even wizards can be over ladies."

I didn't know, but I nodded sagely anyway, feeling very young.

"It seems they had been playing at cards, and the lady had jokingly named the ring as the stake."

"Just how do you know? Did he tell you all this?" I asked, curious that a mage would be divulging such intimate details.

"Oh, I was there—well, not precisely there there, more like in-the-wardrobe there—"



"What were you doing in a wizard's wardrobe?" I thought it was a reasonable question.

Millie got huffy. "I wasn't in the wizard's wardrobe, I have plenty more sense than that. I was in the *lady's* wardrobe. She had, urn, borrowed some other items, and I was simply going to retrieve the one... I didn't realize she'd be back in again so soon. And then when she brought company, I couldn't very well announce myself and spoil the party, now, could I?" She glared with injured dignity. "Do you want me to tell this story or not?"

I suddenly found the arrowhead I was making needed intense inspection. Bending over almost double to examine the scalloped edge, I told her to continue.

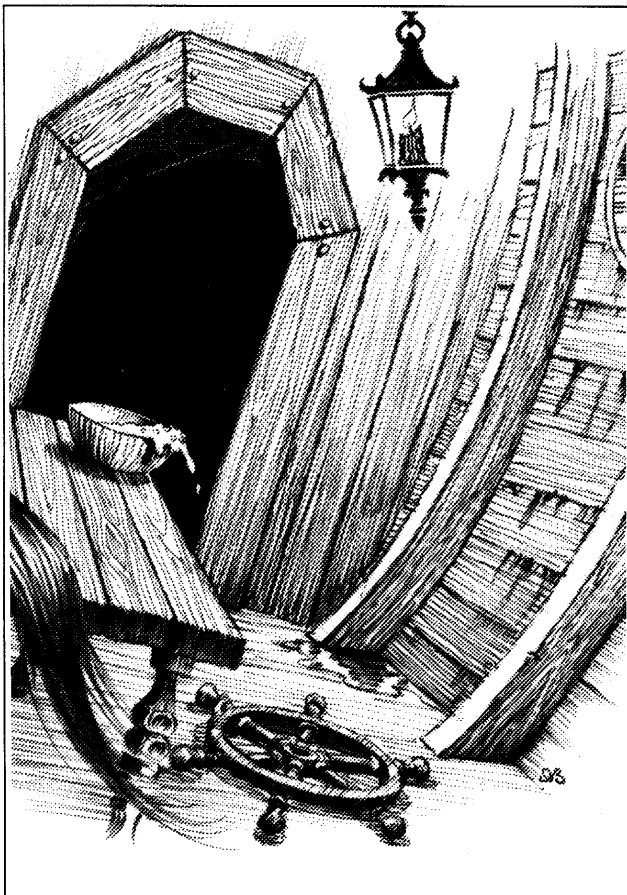
"The wizard declined, and put up another bauble. I didn't get a very clear look at it, because there was a lace sleeve in my way, and I thought it might be ticklish to remove it—well, my lady won. I can't say she was very gracious about it. In fact, I remember her taunting her companion on his lack of card-wits! The little kender woman clucked her tongue here.

"There's a lesson to be learned in all of this. Never taunt a wizard. They don't take kindly to it."

I wasn't sure that was the conclusion I'd draw from the tale. So far, the lady seemed to have the upper hand, and the wizard was being duped. But I didn't have a long acquaintance then with kender logic.

"So then they left?" was all I said.

"No, then they went to bed. My lady must have had some magical abilities herself. I know she cast a sleep spell, because I make it a policy never to snooze when I'm hiding from someone. When I woke up, only the wizard lay in that bed. My lady and the ring were gone. And the other—" Millie paused dramatically.



"The other?" I prompted, hoping she'd clarify which 'other' we were talking about. Pleased, she leaned forward conspiratorially.

"The other bauble he found skewered with his own knife! Right through the silver. It just ruined the piece. I saw it with my own two eyes. Well, dearie, he wasn't happy about that.

"You know, if there's one thing I can't stand in you tall people, it's the tendency you have to blame your misfortunes on us. I mean, just because I was there didn't mean I was meddling. And I certainly wasn't an accomplice! I know you have to make allowances for people's feelings being out of kilter, sometimes, but really! He was unconscionably rude. And I was just offering to help!

"She took some coins and other such, which he was able to retrieve himself. But the ring... that was tougher. Every time he was on the brink of getting it, some disaster befell him. Once, his concentration was interrupted just as he was casting a spell to hold her. Another time, a cart I was hiring for the chase almost ran him down. And then his robe got caught in a tavern door, and she escaped out the back alley while he was tearing it loose. I even have the torn part he left behind," Millie held up a red linen scrap with golden threads trailing from the torn embroidery figures.

"I thought this was a really pretty pattern, the one that's torn here—" Her fingers traced part of a magic rune. A sudden chill breeze shivered the back of my neck.

"Millie—"

She thought I meant to get on with the story. But she tucked the little scrap back among her many pouches.

"The mage lost her, but I managed to stay on her trail. I almost had the ring back—I was waiting for her to go to sleep, because I knew exactly where in her jewelry box she was keeping it. The cleverest little box, dearie, covered with elven satin, and if you pressed the third rosebud a hidden drawer sprang out—but I was telling you... Before she went to bed that night, my lady gave the ring to a ship's captain, in trade for passage on his boat. It took some fancy footwork to get on board that vessel, let me tell you. Only the boat was set upon by pirates—minotaurs—though none had been seen in those waters for near sixty years."

"What happened to the lady?" I asked.

"Overboard," Millie reported with satisfaction. She leaned back into the marigold folds of her cloak. "Probably drowned. The sailors were happy to see her go, she was stirring up trouble between men who'd been mates all their lives. Where was I? Oh yes, the minotaurs.

"Well, they're not as clever as they think themselves. They didn't find me for three days."

That was stretching the truth a little too far, I thought. Even a gullible half-Kagonesti like me, who had spent most of her life in one mountain range, wouldn't believe this chain of accident and circumstance. "What, did minotaurs capture the ship?"

"I don't know." Millie looked startled, as if she had never considered such a thing. "They burn them, usually, unless a member of the crew was particularly honorable or strong."

"But weren't you there?" I asked ingenuously, bent over my arrowpoints. I had almost a dozen, now. I chose one more stone to flake, and tucked the last handful back into the pouch for some other idle moment. My kender companion was rapidly enlarging on her most recent improbability.

"Oh, no, I stowed away on their ship, of course! How else was I going to retrieve the ring? I had it, too. I had it right in my hand. But then they found me, and I had to give the ring

back.” Millie put on a genuinely sad expression. She was even convincing herself! What embellishment would she think of next?

“But I persuaded the minotaurs I was an important captive, and at their next port, they turned me and the ring over to a renegade mage.”

I snorted with laughter. I couldn’t help it. At her hurt glare, I tried to disguise my merriment as a coughing fit.

“I think I swallowed a fly. I’m sorry, Millie, this is very interesting. No, truly. Go on!” But I had interrupted the thrill of her narration. When she did continue, she was quick to conclude the tale.

“The renegade actually used it to save his life when he was besieged by”—a disgusted sideways glance raked my way. She cut short whatever she had been intending to say.—“Well, suffice it to say that the latest holder of the ring is apparently unaware of its magical properties, he just thinks it’s a well-made trinket.”

Her face softened to contemplation.

“I traced him to the Technology Market, but I couldn’t get near enough to get that ring. Your Sendrothalas was not a big help. But I know where he’s heading—back to Solamnia. And I’ll catch him there!”

At the mention of my former master, I froze. My lightheartedness drained away like water through a seine net. Never had I mentioned his name to Millie. I was sure of it. How did she know him?

“Sendrothalas?” I must have spoken the name aloud. Millie flapped her brown hand impatiently in front of my face.

“No, our quarry, the merchant with the ring!”

“How do you know Sendrothalas?”

Plainly, the kender thought I was getting off the track.

“Isn’t he the elf you were serving?” she asked impatiently.

My voice rose. My points lay forgotten around my feet. Millie reached out to fondle a small red jasper one.

“But how do you know his name?”

She shrugged. “I don’t remember. You must have told me!”

It was a lie. I don’t know how I knew, but I did. Why was Millie lying to me? Pain; delayed by the shock of hearing that name, made me realize I was gripping my striker so tightly the edge had cut my skin. “Ow!”

I released the stone and put my palm to my mouth. The metallic taste of blood brought me back to the moment. The kender woman was fussing to see my hand, talking of salves and bandages, and disasters that befell people who didn’t take care of their wounds.

I looked—it was just a little cut. I was paranoid. Millie had been a good friend to me in the short time I’d known her. She was the only person I’d ever met who didn’t want me to be someone else. I must be wrong. With effort, I clamped down on my blooming unease.

“Forget it,” I batted her away playfully, meaning the cut, meaning my suspicions.

“Look, Abbra, he’s past history. Take it from me, you can’t dwell on what’s already happened. We’re partners, now, and we’re going to catch up to this merchant and retrieve that ring!” She blithely glossed over any plan she might have made about the retrieval. “We’re headed in the right direction!”

“How do you know?”

“Well, where would you go, if you had the choice?” Her tone suggested Solamnia was a foregone conclusion. Having never been there, I didn’t know what its attractions were. I guessed it made as good a stopping place as any. Perhaps she

chose it because it was the destination of the *Chislev’s Whisper*, and this was the first boat she could get off of Sancrist. Which would imply that there was no ring.

I frowned. But why then had she booked her passage in advance? This was getting complicated. Again, I resolved to put it out of my mind.

“So what’s our reward for getting the ring back?”

“Well, first, it’ll prove to that wizard that I didn’t take his beastly old ring. And I expect then he’ll realize what a fine job I’ve done, and that I am not like the other kender he knows, and he had no right to be so rude. And then maybe he’ll give us something really nifty. I don’t care about money so much, as long as it’s something interesting.”

I didn’t see how returning a ring proved that she hadn’t taken it in the first place. If there even was a ring. But if there wasn’t, then why were we heading to Solamnia? I shook my head. No more! If there was no ring, then we could get on with looking for the Tower. “Do you think we can really do it?”

“I know we can. I can feel it. Right here!” Millie laid her hands over her lean belly. “We should be there in a week.”

Better make it two weeks, I thought as I necked my new-made arrow and let fly. The pirate I hit lost his grip on the rigging. Clawing at the obsidian point buried in his stomach, he crashed head first onto his own deck. I necked another.

The winds had turned fitful, blowing strongly one day, and all but calm the next. We had headed into the strait between Northern and Southern Ergoth with some trepidation, needing to make the passage swiftly and fearing we would not.

Neither shore was friendly. Goblins held the south coast, and gods knew what occupied the wastes of the north. Our hope that they were not sailors seemed dashed our fourth day out when the watchman sighted a black sail behind us.

For a half a day, that sail hung on our rear horizon. Pirates, the captain said, and the crew armed themselves with cutlasses and gaffhooks. Millie practiced maneuvers with her forked stick—she called it a hoopak. She launched into a long treatise on kender weapons, but I couldn’t listen. Instead, I went below and read my spellbook over, thinking that at least the grease spell might be useful.

Sure enough, when the sun had sunk so that it was behind them, the pirates moved in. We were forced to squint into that blazing fire as our pursuers hove to and made ready to board.

I fired again. Missed this time. My shaft hit the mainmast of the other ship after flying wide of my target. He laughed, and swung out on his boarding rope.

We would soon be fighting hand to hand, and I had not even a dagger. Would my paltry magical skills be of any use?

Millie whirled her hoopak above her head. A wobbling shriek rose like a signal for the battle to begin.

I necked my next-to-last arrow.

The *Chislev’s Whisper* had a crew of 19. The pirates looked to outnumber us by a dozen or so. If they all boarded, I figured we were goners.

Leading the swing of the rope, I fired. My target was still laughing as the arrow struck, deep in the meat of his rope arm. A gasped intake of breath, a surprised look that his hand no longer gripped the way he thought it should, and he tumbled into the sea between the ships.

“Good shot!” Millendria crowed.

Our hulls slammed together, sending most of us, pirate and crew alike, to the deck. My last arrow snapped in half.

Useless.

The words of my spells throbbed like drumbeats inside my skull. It was time to try magic. My grease spell didn't last very long. But if I timed it right... I ducked around the restive horses. Several pirates had swung aboard already, and our crew were engaging them hand-to-hand. Six more swung forward on ropes anchored high in their own rigging.

I raised my hands, and spoke the words of the spell. The plain, hardwood deck midships began to glisten in the setting light, like fire.

One of the pirates, seeing the change, refused to drop, but the others had already loosed their grips. They plummeted to the slippery deck. None kept his feet.

A ragged cheer went up among our crew as the new boarders skidded and sprawled. The ship rolled on the swell of the sea, and the pirates slithered toward the edge. One managed to get a purchase, I was disappointed to see. Our first mate struck him before he could fully stand. Two fell overboard. The remaining two caught at the deckrail, but it was greased, as well. They couldn't maintain their grip, and soon the sea had them, too.

Back on the black-sailed pirate ship, the men looked warier. Were they unwilling to take on a magically protected vessel?

"Abbra Jehanni," our captain roared behind me, his voice big enough to carry clearly to the other vessel, "Commence throwing fireballs on my mark!"

I didn't have a fireball. I certainly couldn't cast more than one even if I did.

But the pirates didn't wait to find that out. Their ship started to pull away. Two brigands still on our deck were close enough to dive across the widening gap. They scrambled back aboard their own ship. I looked around to discover Millie had a prisoner pinned against the forecabin by the fork in her hoopstick. He threw down his weapon, begging for mercy.

All in all, we captured three, and tossed the dead into the drink for the sharks. Five of our crew were injured, and one had been run through. We buried him at sea.

The captain brought the three pirates, their wrists tied in front of them, into his quarters. He sat looking them over as the silence stretched. Their hair was shoulder length, like most of the men in our crew. One had the same dark skin as the captain, but the other two were merely browned by the elements. The prisoners were bruised and cut, but their worst sores had been tended.

"Well," he boomed at last, his big voice commanding in the close confines. "I've lost one good hand today. And I've three that aren't fit to work. Now, I don't have the space to carry prisoners."

There was shifting in their line. Only one man stood impassive, his grey eyes on the wall behind the captain. I thought it was the one Millie had captured. It amazed me anew that such a tiny woman had held down such a large, aggressive man.

"So I'm offering you a deal. If you swear an oath of loyalty to me, I'll make you crew." I thought he was crazy, but I've since heard that such an offer was not uncommon among mariners.

They all took the offer.

Most of the next day was spent repairing the damage caused by the attack. The new men got the worst, most tedious jobs, while the rest of the crew ignored them. They laced the tears in the sail with heavy awls, and then spent the afternoon re-rigging. With the silence and snubs the crew gave them, I wondered

how different being a prisoner might really be.

The captain laughed. "Prisoners are whipped, not left alone. They have to prove they're worth talking to."

I thought of my efforts to prove to Sendrothalas that I was worth teaching, and wasn't sure the proving could be done. Millendria, on the other hand, chattered away with her pirate, the tall Northern Ergothian with the grey eyes. His name was Rodephim. The kender liked him best—first, because she had caught him herself, and then because he answered her. Most of the day, I heard the pattern of her piping voice and his baritone response.

"What were you talking about?" I asked when she came to watch me try my summoning spell. Though I attempted the spell every day, varying my emphasis on the words, I had not summoned even flies for some time.

"Oh, everything he's done in his life. Rodephim was shanghaied by the pirates, you know, he wasn't always one of them. But they kept him as a slave for a while. Until he convinced them he wanted to join them. He says he'd been looking for a ship that seemed likely to repulse the attack, so he could be left behind! He let me capture him on purpose! Of course, I told him I knew..."

The other two former pirates worked steadily but silently at their tasks. They did nothing to antagonize anyone. Gradually, they no longer flinched at a footstep behind them, or started at sudden sounds. Millie's interminable questions they answered in monosyllables, clearly uncomfortable with the attention.

On the second night after the attack, our sailors brought out their pipes and began to play. Each man contributed a tune or a ballad. I think it was a signal that the pirates had been accepted as part of the crew.

For a while, the men tried to keep away from the bawdy songs. But Millie joined in with a kender drinking ditty that chorused:

Swing 'er around  
And up and down  
Hey, swing 'er around til morning

and that was the end of the politeness. Finally, Rodephim borrowed a set of pipes from the first mate.

"I don't think you've heard this one," he said, and played a skirl that dissolved into gulls crying, far away.

Hear ye here, the sad tales are sung  
Now there's nothing left but laughter,  
For we've set the sail, the chores are done,  
And the moons are following after,  
Aye, the moons are following after.

'Tis a world of war, 'tis a world of strife,  
'Tis a world both tough and tender  
'Tis a world where heroes come to life—  
Say, an elf-maid and a kender.  
Aye, an elf-maid, and a kender.

Hoots and whistles sounded all around, and Millie's cheeks turned uncharacteristically pink.

"He's singing about us!"

I thought rather he was casting a charm. Laughter lit the faces gathered round him. All the petty squabbles of the day faded. In between verses, Rodephim played the pipes with the rusty enthusiasm of a man who once had been an expert musician. I wondered where he had learned the gull's cry trick. Our ballad continued another dozen verses. Millie's hoopstick cry was one stanza, and her amazing ability to dodge



the lethal cutlasses of the pirates, and her triumphant capture of Rodephim himself. My greasing the deck was one of the verses, and the non-existent fireballs, too. According to the lyrics, the crew had been helpless without us. The pirate captain took a good drubbing for being beaten "by an elf-maid and a kender." A final flourish of the pipes, and Rodephim bowed.

Bare feet drummed against the deck in approval.

"Sing us another!"

The cry was taken up around the circle. The bard, for he must have been a bard, chose another light ditty, this one familiar, and soon the whole crew was singing along. When at last his voice gave out, it was far into the night.

My chore of keeping the kender occupied was split with Rodephim for the rest of the voyage. The tedium of sailing had returned, with only minor interruptions.

One rainy day, I attempted my summoning spell below decks, and found myself surrounded by what must have been the entire rat population of the ship, chittering and scratching. I was so startled I dropped the rag of red cloth. The rats scurried away, and it took quite some time before I found my rag in the dimness. I wasn't sure I could count that as success.

Rodephim turned out to have more than singing abilities. Millie had recounted to him the tale of our encounter with Grawder and Dagger, in hopes he would add more verses to our ballad. He asked to see the spellbook.

"Why?"

He smiled a little. "I've picked up a few things, here and there. I might be able to tell you if it's still enspelled."

I'd worried about that more than once in the night. Millie trusted him. Did I? His grey eyes seemed to know what I was thinking. Sliding my hand into my tunic, I drew the book out.

"Here. I tore out the back page, Millie might have told you."

He only nodded, and turned the book over in his hands, thumbing the leaves, smoothing the covers. At last, he handed it back.

"No, there's no locating spell on it any more!"

Relief swept through me, more strongly than I had realized. Now there were no more links between Sendrothalas and me.

Except Millie.

She had also told Rodephim about our quest for the ring. The bard seemed to take her word completely. He was willing to join us, having had his fill of sailing with the pirates.

But like a sore that gets infected, my suspicions festered. The new crew members reminded me how little we all knew of one another, and how thin a line loyalty could be. One day buccaneers, the next staunch crew? I doubted it was so quick a transition.

I was almost sure there was no ring.

So where was Millie leading us?

We made port the next day in the coastal village of Gwyn-tarr. Rodephim collected his pay, and used that small stake to earn a slightly bigger one in a local game of bones. Either his bardic charisma, or his immediate return of the money in the form of purchases, tempered the sting of local losses. We stayed late in the common room of the Golden Plough, telling news from Sancrist, and abbreviated accounts of the pirate attack. By the following morning, Rodephim had collected a horse, a cloak, some decent riding boots, and other necessities. He'd traded the curved pirate's cutlass for a plain long sword, with which Millie was definitely impressed.



As for the kender, Millie had seemed to simply wander up and down the street and chatter with more townsfolk. But when we set out, she had a definite destination in mind.

"Didn't I tell you we were going in the right direction? The baker said a group of four men made port just two days ago, and they headed up Deepdel trail!" She handed me a nut-laden pastry.

"And one of those is the man with the ring?"

"Certainly. I'll bet he's heading home with it as a gift for his wife. I'll show that wizard not to bad-mouth kender!"

The new country was wide as the sea had been. And nearly as empty. The tall, tough heathgrass waved and dipped with every skirl of breeze, and the wind blew fast-changing patterns across the tops of the bent stalks. Our trail was solid enough that the horses made good time. Blackbirds called back and forth across the marshland. I breathed the faint tang of salt and the stronger scent of standing water.

Gradually, the meadow changed to firmer ground, and greener smells. Wildflowers bloomed, lending color to the flat green miles, and bees droned,

I had feared the open ocean-I merely hated the unending grass. Never mind that the tops of the blades tickled my thighs while I was mounted. Never mind that the densely spaced stalks would surely have swallowed the kender, bright gold cloak and all, had she climbed down from her perch atop the dappled mare. She was calling it Hopscotch, and she thought mine might be Butterscotch. A dappled gray? My eyes blessed every occasional copse or farmstead that broke the monotony. At last, I had to speak.

"How long are we going to be exposed like this?"

"Exposed like what?" Millie interrupted herself in the middle of a sentence.

"Out in the open. When do we get to the trees?"

Rodephim laughed. "A true elf question, if ever there was one. We should make Deepdel before nightfall, and then we will be in the foothills."

His prediction was correct. We reached the next village at supper time. Millie suggested we eat at the local inn to catch news of our quarry, and as usual, she was rewarded. Perhaps finding was simply a question of phenomenal luck, I decided in a less-suspicious mood.

"They stayed here an extra day to get his horse reshod. That means they left this morning. They told the blacksmith they were heading for the pass to Thelgaard, and they asked him how good the hunting was. I say we push on!"

If they intended to hunt, they wouldn't be traveling fast. I looked at the low-hanging sun.

"Both moons will be up tonight, and Solinari's more than half-full. We should have a fair amount of light," Rodephim put in.

I shrugged, my misgivings too private to voice. "Let's go on then." Why was Thelgaard so familiar? Wasn't that where Sendrothalas had said he was headed after Sancrist? I couldn't remember.

The slope sharpened abruptly about a mile out of the village. Millie found a deer path that had recently seen shod hooves, and we wound higher into the woods. We were following someone, all right. But was it the man with the ring?

My mind was racing in circles, and all I could see was Millie's cheerful expression as she chirped, "I find things, and I give them back." Perhaps she thought she was doing me a favor, returning me to Sendrothalas. But I could no longer endure the servitude I had known in Silvamori.

At first I didn't even notice the mist rising, so engrossed was I in my thoughts. Automatically, I had wrapped my cloak around me at sunset. Now the damp weight of my hair and the chill trickles at my neck made me look up. A hazy, pink-tinged fog blurred the woods to indistinct masses. The low branches scratching at my cheek felt clammy-dead. I shook the thought away.

"Millie? Rodephim?"

A shadow loomed behind me, resolving into the bard. For that alien moment when I had not recognized him, I had imagined a huge monster on our backtrail. Now my mind spun on to more mundane possibilities. Was he somehow in league with Millie? I confess, I jumped just a little when he started to speak.

"Yes, much as I hate to admit it, this is too dense to travel farther, Millie. We should camp for the night."

"There's a clearing right ahead," the kender's cheerful voice sounded muffled in the thick air. She went back to whistling 'our' ballad through her teeth. I thought it might be time to teach her a new ditty. The combination of Millie's whistling and the rattle of empty branches was making me edgy. I wanted to think. I wanted to plan an escape, in case her betrayal came tonight.

We made camp in record time, picketing the horses together and pitching only a single sheet lean-to. One of us would stand watch, such as it was in this sight-muffling miasma, while the other two slept. Millie didn't even figure on a fire.

"Why? Any kindling'll be wet, and it's too thick to wander



about gathering wood. What we need is a good tune to warm us. Sing for us, won't you please?"

Logically, I agreed about the fire, but I could have appreciated the golden glow of flames tonight. My heart was chill.

"I'll take first watch," Rodephim started to say. He didn't finish.

"Will you look at that..." Millie breathed. She was staring across my shoulder. I turned slowly around in the bloody pink fog.

We were surrounded by a dozen or more skeletons. Wisps of fog wreathed the walking bones, snaking in and out of ribs, draping off appendages like expensive ladies' gowns. Their weapons-swords and pikes, mostly-gleamed far too brightly in the clinging mist. Slowly, creaking with soft hideousness, they advanced toward us, closing in a rough circle.

Rodephim eased back to my side.

I shuddered involuntarily. The stink of decay wafted on the moist air. "You ever met these before?" I asked, not making the connection yet.

"Once," he admitted grimly.

Millie, on the other hand, scampered forward, and then back, as if teasing a wave on the seashore. When she advanced, the bones retreated a little. When she darted sideways, they turned in that direction.

"You have, dearie? That's terrific! Well, now that we've seen them, you can tell us how to get rid of them. The short version, that is. I'm not sure we have."

"I never learned a short way," the bard interrupted. "All I know is, smash them until they don't get up, and don't let

them get you first." He drew his new sword, and stood poised, the tip about shoulder high.

The rattle of bones grew more audible. The skeletons kept advancing.

"Is that it?" the kender sounded curiously disappointed. I crouched, feeling around for something, anything, heavy to smash with-a rock, a branch...

"Perhaps you could sing a song and charm them into stopping," Millie told the bard.

That was a ridiculous suggestion-how could you charm something that wasn't even alive? I thought angrily, knowing Rodephim would set the kender straight. Wait a minute... Even as he replied something, *her* chirping voice echoed in my head, recalling another time. I dropped the slimy, bark-bare tree limb I had finally found.

"These aren't skeletons." Betrayal bit bitter and deep. "Damn it, Millendria, these are just illusions! It's one of Sendrothalas' favorite spells." I turned to Rodephim.

Whatever his answer had been, the bard was lifting his rich, enchanting voice in the simple lyrics of the Wanderers' Call. It is an old tune, one my father used as a lullaby. It gathers the audience, calls scattered tribesfolk to the campfire for the night's fellowship. Except that I knew illusions were not affected, I could have laughed at the choice: if anything, such a song would bring attackers to us, not drive them away.

"You don't have to sing! You don't have to smash anything. All you have to do is not believe."

The bones were almost upon us now. The illusion was a strong one, enhanced no doubt by the weird, unsavory fog. Furious with Millie, disgusted by my master's ability to corrupt a woman I'd counted my friend, I raised my hand to the nearest sword-rattling skeleton. When I swept my fist through the image of the illusion, it would swirl away in a roil of pink mist-no blade, no bones, no danger. I charged straight at it and struck out.

Solid, fetid bones blocked my swing!

I'd aimed for the ribs. The shock of flesh meeting skeleton jarred my arm back to the shoulder, but the force of my blow sent the creature reeling sideways. It flailed for a purchase, its sword knocked too high to cut me, the other hand raking welts across my upper arm.

I must have cried out, but I don't remember. Another skeleton thrust at me from the right, and I kicked it back, stunned.

They were real?!

I knew more creatures were menacing, but my mind had not yet caught up to my body in this onslaught.

Rodephim waded forward, putting himself in danger to save me, hammering the flat of his sword blade down on rotting skulls. The ballad echoed on, mockingly, in my brain. I don't know when he stopped singing. My limbs seemed to be acting of their own accord in this battle for survival, playing out the training of years of discipline with no commands from my numbed mind. I scurried crabways for that slimy tree limb.

They were real.

The one I'd kicked back staggered forward again. I swung the branch around, solidly connecting. The slick-surfaced log kept going, sliding through my hands, and I dug my nails into the rotting wood. Arm bones broke, ribs caved in. Not mine, fortunately. On my left, I heard the shrill whine of Millie's hoopak, followed by the crack of bone.

Then we were all pounding, crushing-as Rodephim had said, smashing to smithereens. There was no time to think, only the rote connection of eye to hand; parry, bash.

The undead creatures weren't very tough, but there were a lot more of them than there were of us. My log acquired quite a few sword notches. Millie's forked stick reached in front of me at least once, to tangle with a spear-shaft punching through my log-defense. I'm sure there were heroic moments aplenty, but my mind's eye could not record them. The skeletons kept coming, and I kept swinging until I heard Rodephim's ragged voice gasp, "Enough! They're done. They're gone."

As if shaking off a nightmare-as if waking from exhaustion, which was a truer image-I looked around. White jags of bone littered the clearing. Millie leaned, panting, on her hoopak. One sleeve hung torn and bloody from her shoulder, her exposed flesh damply gleaming in the mist. Legs spread for balance, his own clothing cut in many places, Rodephim stirred aimlessly in the litter with the point of his sword. We were alive.

Suddenly the log was too heavy. I dropped it, and sat down abruptly. Bending my knees up, I rested my forehead against them.

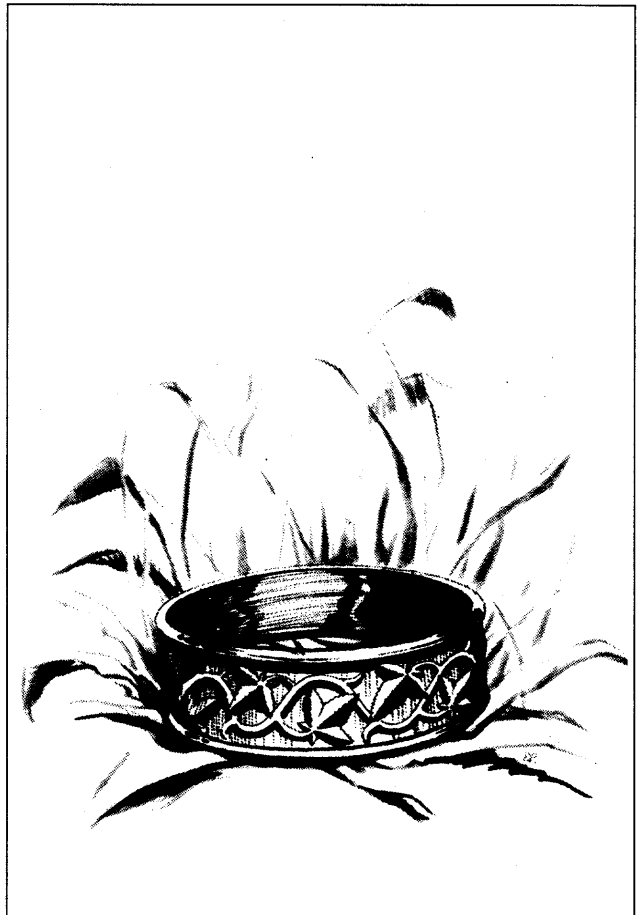
"I nearly killed us." My voice came out a croak. My scalp itched; my fingers came away bloody.

"It wasn't Sendrothalas. It was never Sendrothalas at all. Rodephim told me. You told me, and I thought you were lying. Oh, Millie...!" Heartsick, I rolled my head sideways to look at the tiny woman.

She was grinning.

"I know, dearie, I should really be angry at you-only no one ever believes me, do they? I'm just a kender, after all. Even if I am trying to be helpful, and-goodness!" Her grin slid wider. "Wow! That was really exciting!" And she toppled over.

I was by her side in an instant, feeling for her lifebeat—



strong—checking the extent of her wounds. The numerous scratches I dabbed with water-dampened moss. Her arm, the exposed one, was sliced more deeply across the back of the shoulder. I tore a strip of shirt to make a bandage. As Rodephim held her and I wrapped, she came to again.

"Did I faint, dearie, I always wanted to faint. You know, you don't look too good yourself. Your eyes are almost as big as your fa—Ouch!" I think I tightened the bandage a little abruptly. More guilt overflowed my heart.

"I thought-forgive me, I thought you were returning me—" I'm sure my apology would have been long and tearful, had it been made to any other person. But a kender is never down for long. And other problems suddenly became more pressing.

The snap of branches trod upon, the rustle of leaf litter, told us something else was coming through the woods.

Rodephim braced himself to raise his sword again. I stayed his arm—these made too much noise to be undead approaching.

"Halloo!" A very human voice called, near at-hand. The fog swirled at the edge of the clearing. Light haloed a guttering torch.

"Halloo! We heard singing."

The newcomers, by their clothing, were not fighting men, but merchants. I saw them check as they surveyed the bone-shard littered ground. One made a sign against magic with his hand. I remembered that humans often distrusted the art. Still stunned by my own misjudgment, I let Rodephim greet them.

"Well met, this foggy night. Yes, there was singing." He strode forward to clasp hands.

With the torch's help, and some oil, we found enough dryish wood to coax a small, smoky fire. We three cleaned up a bit, and the newcomers slowly relaxed. No one looked at the bones.

They asked about the attack, of course, and that led to why we were traveling through, and why they were. Millie seemed eager to tell everything—or at least, eager to talk. She spun a tale of the ring quest vastly different from the version she'd told me. Now, it seemed the golden band she tracked was an enchanted family heirloom, stolen on the eve of her sister's wedding...

I couldn't figure out where she was leading, until the first man pulled out his belt pouch.

"You say it had ivy vines carved into the band?"

I must have been truly battle-fatigued, for I only now made the connection. What other travellers would be within charm-shot of us in these woods? This was our quarry. This was the merchant we had been following all day. The man with the ring.

Sure enough, he spilled a gold band into his hand.

Millie gasped with a pleasure that I'm sure was genuine.

"That's it! That's my sister's enchanted ring!"

I had wondered how we were going to get the ring back—I could not have guessed the merchant would willingly give it over! He had no interest in possessing anything enchanted. In fact, he had to be pressed to take coins to cover his original outlay.

It was near dawn by the time we sent the men back to their own camp. The kender woman tucked the ring in a tiny velvet drawstring bag, and stowed that near her heart. I felt exhausted, wrung out, curiously let down.

We had traveled for weeks, battled pirates and skeletons, nearly died because of my stupidity—and had the ring handed to us? It made no sense.

"Now what?"

"We just have to get it back to the wizard," Millie said sleepily.

"Why not keep it?" Rodephim asked.

I blinked across the fire. The bard's face was emotionless.

"Keep it? It doesn't belong to us," the kender protested.

"And who knows it was ever recovered?"

He had a point. With increasing persuasion, he enumerated more. "To the right buyer, the ring is worth far more than we just gave the honest merchant. Or perhaps we could use it ourselves." Rodephim turned to me. "The ring protects mages, does it not? Isn't that why the red-robe is so eager to recover it? Why not bestow it on our own magic user?"

Why not indeed? Millie's hand was at her throat, clutching her shirt collar closed. But she—the irrepressible chatterer—didn't say anything. Our eyes met, held. Slowly, she shook her head.

I echoed the gesture, sagging with relief.

"It doesn't belong to us."

I thought we had finally reached a conclusion. But in this night of surprises, I was ever wrong.

Rodephim's expression was curiously pleased. As Millie's repeated words faded into the dawn, that part of him, at least, stayed fixed, but his bright pirate costume blurred into red, lengthening into a full robe. A wizard's robe, runes embroidered in gold thread around the hem, hood thrown back from cropped, graying hair. His face broadened and aged.

It was like something out of a children's tale, fantastic beyond all explaining. I could only stare. Millie gasped, confirming my guess. We didn't have to find the red-robed owner of the ring. He had found us.

Red robes, I thought. At least he isn't dangerous.

"You passed my test, Millendria Gemgetter. I needed to know if you were persistent, capable—" Millie, after her first awed astonishment, had hurriedly pulled the velvet bag out of her shirt and offered it to the wizard. He interrupted himself to accept it, "—and honest. So I staged the ring's theft."

Her eyes agog with curiosity, Millie no longer seemed the least bit sleepy. "Staged it! Why—but—" Clearly, too many questions jostled in her head for her mouth to get them all out. "How did you get on the pirate ship? Why couldn't you get it back yourself?—Test?! Just what are you testing me for, you slig-brained—"

"Stop!" One word was all he said, but the bard—my fuddled mind corrected, wizard-spoke with such authority, even voluble Millie did stop.

"I have a rather urgent quest, one that involves finding a precious item. I needed to be sure you were the right woman to undertake it for me."

She wasn't sure whether to be insulted or inquisitive for a moment. Inquisitive won out.

"What sort of quest? Who are you really? Does it involve danger and skeletons and stuff—I mean, now that we know what to do—"

"I cannot tell you who I am—no, don't protest. I'm sure we all three of us have some secrets we must keep!" I knew he looked toward me, but I had closed my eyes, not wanting to discuss secrets when my self-control was so fragile. "So answer me this, finder. Will you accept the quest?"

"Of course I will! You tall folk ask some pretty stupid questions," Millie mumbled, half under her breath.

"Then I will explain everything, Millendria—in the morning!"



## Kayolin (kaolyn)

**Culture:** Surrounded by humans, the main population of Kayolin remains solidly Mountain Dwarf, both Hylar and Daewar clans, although Solamnic, Lemish, and Mountain Barbarian are spoken. In the wilder areas, bandits and other desperados swap stories in Ogre, Goblin, and Draconian. The governmental structure here remains colonial.

**Geography:** South of the Solamnic plains, a rugged chain of mountains holds the subterranean city of Garnet. The city began as a dwarven mining colony, granted by Solamnia in return for wartime assistance. Needless to say, many of the city's passages follow rich mineral veins mined by the first settlers.

The dwarves also discovered vast stores of marble, which they quarried and polished to line their high halls. In time, their city, though far smaller than Thorbardin or the fabled Thoradin, has become a site of splendor and beauty.

The eastern half of the kingdom of Kayolin contains rich prairie lands. The dwarves of Garnet all but ignore this area, though they trade with the human farmers who crop it.

**Climate:** Kayolin enjoys the same temperate weather that blesses Solamnia around it. Summers grow hot with 'ample rain, and winters grow cold with plenty of snow.

The mountainous side of Kayolin remains cooler through the summer months and becomes absolutely snow-bound in deep winter. Of course, the dwarves in Garnet are little bothered by the above-ground climate in their lovely subterranean city.

**Politics:** Two dwarven clans dwell within Garnet: the Hylar and the Daewar. The former, being of the stock that delved Thoradin and the fabulous metropolis of Thorbardin, were the first to arrive in Garnet. It is their sense of grandeur that has made Garnet into a city of wrought iron and polished marble. The Daewar, on the other hand, came afterward, when the need for skilled merchants and tradespersons arose. They have lived peaceably with the Hylar rulership through the ages, including the current thane.

Although Governor Flowstone comes from Hylar stock, he rules equitably. A Council of Thanes—representatives of each clan in Garnet—advises him in every decision.

When Garnet had grown strong enough to stand on its own, Thorbardin declared its colony's sovereignty. The Hylar thane who was chosen to rule established strong and friendly ties to Thorbardin, and these have lasted ever since.

Both Garnet and Thorbardin serve as storehouses of wealth, history, and culture. While other civilizations were decimated by the War of the Lance, Garnet stood firm. Now the dwarves seek to help Solamnia heal their land, and to drive out the hobgoblin hordes that have taken over Lemish.

**Trade:** Despite its inaccessibility, the reclusiveness of its dwarven citizens, and its hostile eastern neighbor, Garnet is a center of trade in the New Sea area. Fine gems, garnets, iron-work, steelwork, and wagon wheels make Garnet attractive to merchants of all ilk.

But most of all, Garnet is a center of trade because it is Northern Ansalon's greatest minter of steel, silver, and copper pieces. In Garnet markets, buyers "buy" bags of coins with the goods they have brought to the city. In turn, the coin brokers of the city then set these goods out to be bought with coinage. In this fashion, Garnet profits twice on each item sold.

## Dougan Redhammer



Dougan has a loud, boisterous voice that can nearly wake the dead. He is a cheerful, friendly fellow who loves drinking and gambling (typically in that order). When sober, Dougan has the staunch, moral, no-nonsense attitude of any good dwarf. When drunk, carousing and gambling get the better of him.

Dougan can drink anyone, whatever the race, under the table. He makes up for this skill with his incredibly bad luck at gambling. He bets on anything—which direction a fly will go, which paw a cat will lick first—anything. Dougan has even been known to bet his companions' belongings, often without their permission. And he almost always loses.

Few if any Ansalonians know that Dougan Redhammer is one avatar that Reorx takes when he comes to Krynn. He is found not only in this area, but wanders the face of the continent. His boisterous personality usually masks the serious and pragmatic motives of his presence on Krynn. The people whose belongings he loses seldom really need the possessions they lose and, in the long run, Reorx rewards them with many more riches.

## Lemish

**Culture:** Humans, goblins and trolls make up wicked Lemish's main populations. The recent addition of the Blue Dragonarmy means that Draconian and Nerakese have been added to the linguistic mix that already encompasses Common, Lemish, Solamnic, and Goblin. Smaller pockets of Ogre and Gully Talk exist among their native speakers.

**Geography:** This small nation is pinched between Solamnia, Estwilde, and the New Sea. A narrow mountain range guards its eastern borders from incursions by the Estwilde barbarians. At the same time, the Northern and Southern Darkwoods hold back the folk of Throt to the east and those of Solamnia to the west. Between these dense forests lie grassy plains and winding rivers that reach north into Solamnia.

**Climate:** Lemish enjoys the same temperate climate that Solamnia does, though the winters of Lemish last a few weeks longer. Ample rainfall makes for thick vegetation in the Darkwoods and in the central plains. The mountains to the east and west are snow-capped for nine months of the year. In the depths of winter, ice closes the New Sea bays.

**Politics:** During the War of the Lance, the eastern third of this small nation fell before the Blue Dragonarmy. The victory came not through military conquest, but through treachery. A man, Nellthis, allowed the Dragonarmy to take the eastern region, if he could rule the rest. Now, Nellthis seeks to keep Lemish clear of Knightly interference. Like their current ruler, the folk of Lemish nurse petty jealousies, practice profiteering, and engage in slave trade. A Solamnic-Lemish confrontation is inevitable.

**Trade:** These hunters and sailors export timber and build small, fast, maneuverable sailing vessels. They also trade in smaller boats, nautical equipment, cabinetwork, poultry, medicines, woods, legumes, mushrooms, and herbs. They do their best trade with Sanction, although some of their goods travel north on the Solanthus road.



### Abanasinia and The Seeker Lands

**Culture:** No single political capital unites the various peoples of this region. The plains tribes have sovereign villages; Solace, Haven, and the Seeker Lands between comprise a theocracy. There are substantial populations of plains barbarians and other humans, hill dwarves, centaurs, and unfortunately, goblins.

Half a dozen languages are spoken in the region, the most common being Abanasinian and Goblin. Common and Hand Talk allow merchants and other travelers to converse with strangers. The rare native speaks Qualinesti or, even less frequently, Centaur.

**Geography:** Those who speak of Abanasinia generally refer to the grain-burgeoning plains south of the Straits of Schallsea and north of Qualinesti and the Kharolis Mountains. The country also contains the northern reaches of the Kharolis range and the Eastwall Mountains.

In the extreme east of Abanasinia stands a fetid swamp where the ruins of Xak Tsaroth lurk. South of this cursed land lies a forest that has no name in any civilized tongue. The barbarians simply call the place "the Trap;" and the Seekers call it "The Unnameable." This forest purportedly contains many rare and exotic plants crucial for magical potions, poultices, and the like. It also purportedly contains legions of ghosts.

West lie the Seeker Lands, including the tree village of Solace, and its legendary Inn of the Last Home. Darken Wood shelters some of Krynn's most beautiful and furtive beasts: dryads, centaurs, woodland spirits of all sorts, and, it is said, unicorns.

**Climate:** Abanasinian weather tends to be fickle. Its hot summers provide near-perfect conditions for the grains grown here. Rain does not come regularly to the plain, but

falls in downpours when it arrives. During the winter, moist air from the Straits of Schallsea clashes with bitterly cold air from the mountains, producing heavy snowfalls. The critical pass of Sentinel Gap in the Seeker Lands often snows closed, leaving Solace cut off from Haven.

**Politics:** The forbidding mountains, swamps, forests, and seas that ring Abanasinia insulate this region from the spread of civilization. However, the destruction of Que-Shu and the turmoil of the War of the Lance have taught the barbarian tribes the benefits of cooperation with each other. The barbarians harbor particular suspicions of the Qualinesti.

**Trade:** The barbarian folk of Abanasinia trade chiefly in corn, furs, horses, feathers, woven blankets, pottery, and 'wari hide. The mixed populace of the Seeker Lands specializes in smithing, ale, weapons, armor, and (of course) hospitality. The barbarians often journey to Solace for weapons, armor, and Qualinesti leather.

### Otik Sandath



Otik has a loud, jolly voice that carries over the rumble of a crowded room. He is a large man (impressively so) but so friendly that those who have never seen his anger tend to underestimate him. He truly enjoys his life as an inn owner. He feels that he brings good to the world by serving hungry and thirsty people the best food and drink he can. He makes splendid spiced potatoes.

Otik prefers to quiet unruly patrons with a free drink so everyone can get back to their good times. If this proves unsatisfactory, Otik tumbles the offender(s) out the door.

Otik was an adventurer for a time, but found constant alertness and violence was not for him. When he saved up a bit, he created the kind of quiet, friendly inn where he had found pleasure on the road. The name "Inn of the Last Home" reflects his desire to settle here in comfort till the end of his days.

Otik is on good terms with everyone in the area. Most frequent his famous inn. He counts the Heroes of the Lance as close friends, especially Tika, whom he regards as a daughter.

### Bupu



The gully dwarf Bupu has a somewhat congested voice. She always sounds a bit like a three-year-old. To other gully dwarves, she uses the harsh tones of one who expects to be obeyed. Addressing someone dangerous, she has the servile, groveling cadences common to all threatened Aghar.

If threatened, Bupu pulls out anything resembling a weapon and pretends to be dangerous. If her opponents are startled by this bluff, Bupu runs. Given time to prepare her "magic," she casts "spells" using random bits of garbage that she had chanced to be holding when something good happened once.

Bupu is an exceptional Aghar, almost able to count to three (as the saying goes). She married the Highbulp himself, which secured her title as High Priestess.

Bupu lives in Xak Tsaroth, the sunken city on the coast of the New Sea. If her city floods completely, she and her people will surely seek out some other wretched ruin.

## qualinestī

**Culture:** Qualinost, the capital built by Kith-Kanan, founder of this nation, stands as a monument to the ideals of freedom and interaction with the world, which are the cornerstones of this elven society. Qualinesti is the official spoken language, but the long-lived elves also commonly master Silvanesti, Common, Ergot, and/or Hill Dwarf. It is not unheard of to find Qualinesti elves conversant in Abanasinian, Mountain Dwarf, Hand Talk, Ogre, or even Goblin.

**Geography:** Just west of the Kharolis Mountains lies the Qualinesti Forest of Wayreth. Unlike the Silvanesti Wood, this forest is a healthy, thriving forest of oak, maple, ash, val-lenwood, apple, peach, and pear trees. The single city of note in Qualinesti is Qualinost, founded by Kith-Kanan when he led the Qualinesti people from the oppressive Silvanesti homeland. Here also stands the gold-burnished Tower of the Sun, where the Speaker of the Suns resides. Instead of city walls, Qualinost is surrounded by four arched bridges that run from guard tower to guard tower. At city center lies the open square called the Hall of the Sky, which overlooks the whole sylvan city.

Attached to the forest of Wayreth, but magically able to appear within a wide circumference, the Tower of High Sorcery occasionally manifests itself in Qualinesti.

**Climate:** During the four winter months between H'rar-mont and Chislmont, a harsh chill rolls into the forest, bringing with it heavy snows. In the heart of winter, the cold sometimes grows so extreme as to split the trunks of ancient trees, sending a sudden, thunderous echo through the wood. When finally spring does arrive, the snows melt quickly, giving place to wildflowers and soft grasses. A rainy summer sets in during Corij and lasts more than three months, bringing with it some hot days. Thankfully, though, the trees cast a comfortable canopy over the elves who dwell in Qualinesti, keeping them cool. Autumns are typically dry and temperate, providing a perfect stage for harvest fests. The deciduous trees turn deep hues of gold, bronze, silver, red, and violet during the autumn.

**Politics:** The Qualinesti elves are ruled by the Speaker of the Suns, a blood descendant of Kith-Kanan, and thus of Silvanos. The Speaker guides the Senate, a governmental body made up of representatives of the various guilds and communities.

Currently, the Speaker of the Suns is discussing a peace treaty with the elves of Southern Ergoth, and reinforcing the northern borders against possible barbarian incursions. Also, in a political move reminiscent of the building of Pax Tharkas, the Qualinesti seek to strengthen ties with dwarven Thorbardin. With their alliances, the Qualinesti hope to guarantee the stability of Southern Ansalon.

The Conclave of Wizards, occupants of the Tower of High Sorcery, are concerned politically only in issues of magic.

**Trade:** Unlike the isolationist Silvanesti, the Qualinesti enthusiastically immerse themselves in the Ansalonian marketplace. They export fruits, leather, wine, liquors, bows and arrows, and wood to Abanasinia, Solamnia, Sancrist, Hyllo, Northern Ergoth, Southern Ergoth, and Thorbardin. The Qualinesti employ a great fleet of Solamnic ships to facilitate their trade. Thorbardin exports steel and gems to the elves.

The Tower of High Sorcery needs no trade routes, as its wizards are able to use magic to transport supplies.



### Par-Salian of the White Robes



This 70-year-old man has a quiet but clear voice. He appears extremely frail, but his eyes are a bright glittering blue. He has

long white wispy hair, which he is constantly pushing from his eyes. He prefers to spend his time in study rather than action.

He would like very much to set aside his responsibilities as leader of the White Robed Wizards but will not retire while Raistlin remains a threat to the world. He will under no circumstances leave the Tower of Wayreth.

It was Par-Salian's decision to allow Raistlin to take his Test at such an early age. Many believe this premature Testing propelled Raistlin into his pact with Fistandantilus and his fall into evil. Par-Salian is the most powerful of the heads of the orders and thus, the Head of the Conclave; he gained his current position primarily through his magical prowess.

### Justarius of the Red Robes



The wizard Justarius speaks in a robust voice. He is a friendly person with an open, honest face. He does not trust others quickly, and is not overly compassionate toward those he does not know.

He is very loyal once he makes a friend and always keeps his word. He walks with a pronounced limp and is prone to rely on magic more than strength if in danger.



As a young mage, Justarius was very proud of his physical abilities and was forced to choose between physical prowess and magic. The spectral foes at his magical Testing tore his left leg, leaving it crippled and nearly paralyzed. During the long healing process, he honed his magical abilities and eventually rose to the top of his order. As one who is truly neutral, he has not made many enemies. Some say he is next in line to head the conclave after Par-Salian. Due to his position, he has few opportunities for friendship, but admires and respects Par-Salian and Ladonna, the heads of the other two orders.

## Ladonna



Ladonna, Mistress of the Black Robes, has a sultry voice that many men find irresistible. She impresses all who meet her with her wit and charm. A woman of striking beauty, Ladonna refuses to use magic to hide her age. Underneath her seductive exterior, however, she is ruthless and utterly dedicated to her position.

Ladonna routinely allows others to underestimate her. When conflicts arise, she crushes her enemies completely. She does not hesitate to use any means at her disposal, including assassination and murder, to deal with opposition to her power. The only person she fears is Raistlin. She knows that if he ever did challenge her for her position, he would not hesitate to kill her outright.

Ladonna was apprenticed as a teenager to Arianna—a sorceress of the Black Robes who became Chief Overseer of the library in Wayreth's Tower of High Sorcery. This position allowed her to gain a wealth of knowledge from materials to which she might otherwise have been denied access. When Arianna died at the age of 50, Ladonna was elevated to her position. She thus assumed a seat on the conclave at the ten-

der (for her profession) age of 30.

During Ladonna's apprenticeship, Arianna had a brief affair with Par-Salian. They had a daughter, of whom Par-Salian never knew. Ladonna sent the child to a trusted family in Palanthus to be raised, but the ship on which she sent the baby disappeared without a trace. Ladonna sometimes feels guilt over this loss and hopes that the child is alive somewhere.

## Thorbardin, Pax Tharkas, and Kharolis

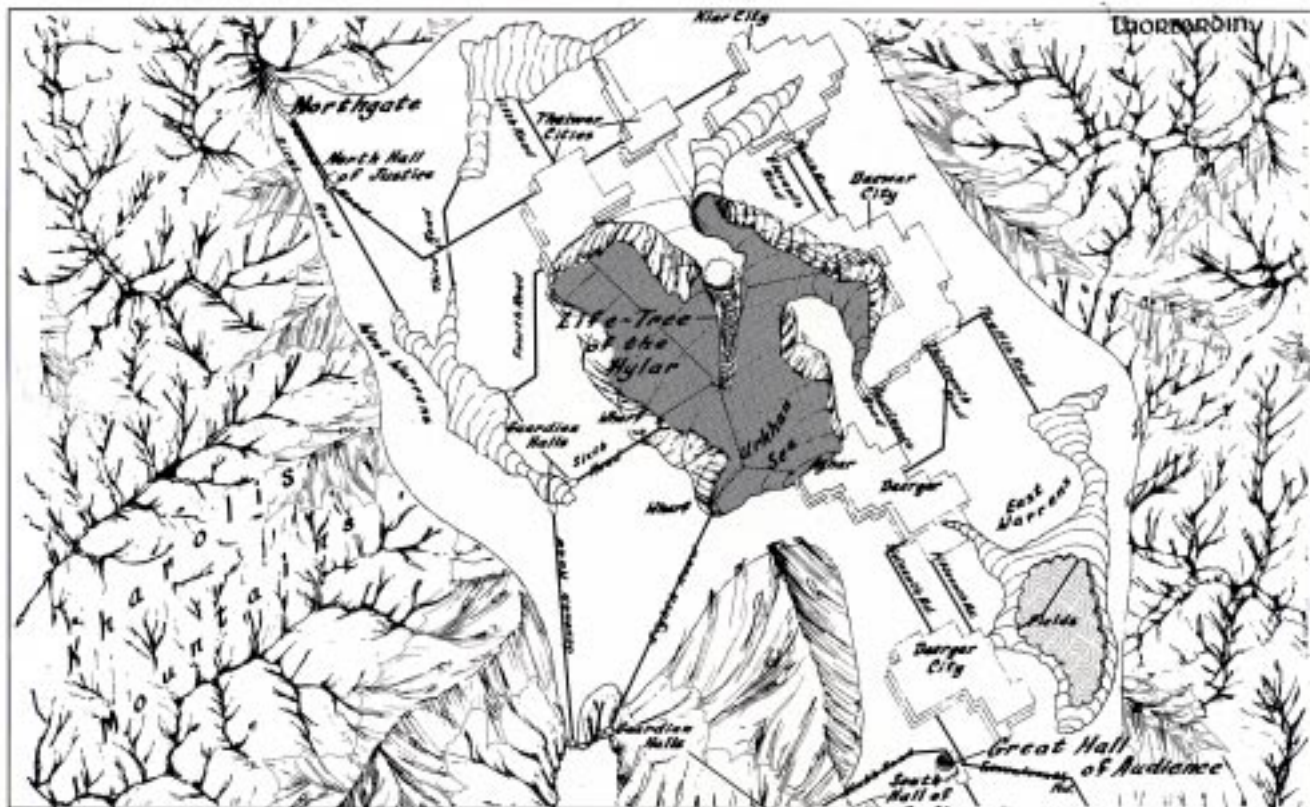
**Culture:** Though Thorbardin is an almost exclusively dwarven nation, the various temperaments of the five clans give its population diversity. Hylar, Daewar, Daergar, Theiwar, and Klar dwarves maintain separate cities within the delvings. The nation's governing centers are Zakhalax and the Life Tree of the Hylar.

Naturally, Mountain Dwarf is the most widely understood language, though many are conversant in Hill Dwarf, Kharolian, Common, Qualinesti, Ogre, Goblin, and even far-flung Ergot.

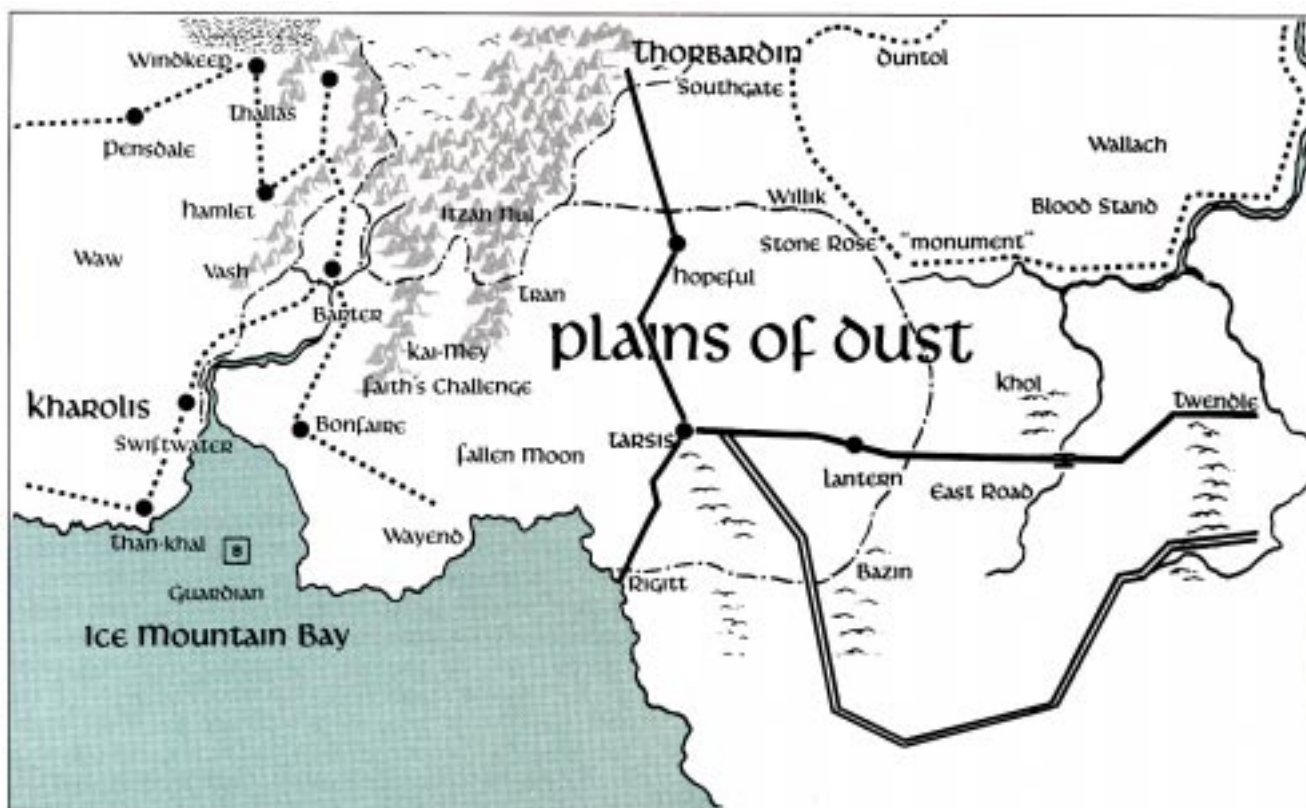
The subterranean republic of Thorbardin, the major settlement in this region, underlies the mountain wilderness of Kharolis, which supports no significant sentient population. Pax Tharkas is the largest surface community in the region.

**Geography:** The greatest mountains of southern Ansalon are the Kharolis range, which run from Abanasinia in the north to within 20 miles of Ice Mountain Bay in the south. This 170-mile span of mountains houses five sites critical to the fate of Ansalon: Thorbardin, Skullcap, Pax Tharkas, Qualinost, and Solace. (For more information on Qualinost, see "Qualinesti;" for more information on Solace, see "Abanasinia.")

Thorbardin ranks among the wonders of Ansalon—an excavation 22 miles from north to south and 14 miles from east to west. Within this range, Thorbardin contains seven major cities, three farming warrens, two governmental areas, and a







burial area. Between each of these sites, cable-ways run along tunnel roads. At the heart of Thorbardin rests the Urkhan Sea. At the center of the sea stands a stalagmite that is one-fourth of a mile wide and half a mile high. This is the Life Tree of the Hylar, who carved out a 28-level citadel in it.

Between Thorbardin and Pax Tharkas squats the ruin of Skullcap. Once a great tower of sorcery, Skullcap gained its present skull shape when the evil mage Fistandantilus unleashed a magical barrage that melted the stone. Much magic remains in the ruins.

Pax Tharkas, a mighty fortress between Qualinost and Thorbardin, came into being through an uncommon peace between dwarves, elves, and humans. Before the Cataclysm, both elves and dwarves staffed it, but afterward, only dwarves guarded the walls. During the War of the Lance, Verminaard captured the fortress, planning to make use of the iron mines below. However, the Heroes of the Lance infiltrated the fortress and liberated it before the war's end.

**Climate:** The Kharolis region experiences varied climatic conditions. In the north, near Abanasinia, the mountains remain cool for much of the year, though they do endure the full range of seasons. Farther south, in the area where Thorbardin is delved, the climate has grown much colder and drier. Here summers are short, lasting only about two months from late Corij to early Reorxmont. In contrast, winter weather extends five months. This area receives more snow than rain. The southern tip of the Kharolis range shares the near-arctic climate of the Plains of Dust.

**Politics:** Thorbardin has cemented an alliance with Solamnia, and currently settles a similar treaty with Qualinesti. Much of the latter treaty centers on the restoration of Pax Tharkas. The dwarves hope to restore Thorbardin to its pre-Cataclysm glory, with new mines and more cities. In addition, these long-lived and grudge-holding dwarves reserve a special hatred for the dwarves of Zhakar, the thanoi of Icewall,

and the remaining dragonarmies. The Zhakar are a sore spot with the Thorbardin dwarves, who feel an obligation to put an end to their foul brethren once and for all.

Despite its occupation for much of the war, Pax Tharkas emerged relatively unscathed, except for a lingering draconian stench.

**Trade:** Thorbardin willingly trades steel, iron, gems, weapons, tools, metals, coins, and spirits to Tarsis and Qualinesti in return for fruits, leather, wagons, furs, and mercenaries. Pax Tharkas is mining and refining its iron to help pay for its repairs and clean-up.

### *Tarsis and The Plains of Dust*

**Culture:** The Plains of Dust, like Icereach, is a vast, empty region with a meager population. Tarsis is the nominal capital of the republic, which encompasses human, thanoi, and goblin settlements. The isolation here keeps any one language from dominance. Kharolian, Silvanesti, Mountain Dwarf, Hill Dwarf, Ice Barbarian, Thanoi, and Minotaur are all likely, whereas Common is not, although occasional settlements know it. Ogre and Goblin also find limited usage.

**Geography:** Aside from Istar, Tarsis was arguably the city most decimated by the Cataclysm. The surrounding lands, which were once grassy-but-fragile tundra, died. Worse yet, the bay that had made Tarsis a thriving port receded overnight, leaving ocean-going vessels strewn upon a dry sea floor. Suddenly Tarsis, famed for its library, schools, marketplace, port, and temple had become an isolated, near-arctic outpost. Although still the key trade route to all points south, Tarsis continues to dwindle.

The only other notable geographic feature of this area is the winding river Torath, whose size rivals that of the mighty Vingard in Solamnia.

**Climate:** Year round, the climate here is chill. Summer lasts

for a mere two months, barely reaching comfortable temperatures before plunging back into frigid cold. Precipitation comes rarely to this area, and mostly in the form of snow. Even the Torath River valley remains largely dry, its turgid, dun-colored water coming from the run-off of Icewall Glacier. In the depths of winter, the southern reaches of this river freeze hard enough to allow caravans to use it as a roadway. A merchant can set off from Tarsis upon the east road, then ride upon the Torath all the way to the Silvanesti road. So doing, the caravan will reach Waylorn's Tower before thaw.

**Politics:** The Lord of Tarsis, whose office commands but a shadow of its pre-Cataclysm glory, has commissioned a road to Ice Mountain Bay. This route, and the outpost that will stand at the end of it, should renew the role of Tarsis as the Lordcity of southwest Ansalon. Further, the Lord of Tarsis works to stimulate trade with Thorbardin to his north and the dispossessed elves of Silvanesti to the east.

The thanoi of Icereach threaten this fragile nation, coming at times to raid the city. Recently, an envoy of human barbarians descended from Icereach to seek alliance, but their intentions are suspect to the Lord of Tarsis.

**Trade:** In return for furs, horses, and wagons traded to Thorbardin, Tarsis receives dwarven steel, weapons, and tools of masonry. Many dwarven engineers and road-builders have found occupation among the humans in their construction of the bay road. Once the bay road is complete, the folk of Tarsis will send ships and caravans as far north as Qualinesti to establish trade there.

Tarsis trades warhorses to the dispossessed Silvanesti, who hope to use these mounts to retake their homeland. Tarsis also hires mercenaries of most any race to fight back the encroaching thanoi of Icereach.

## Icereach

**Culture:** A relatively new region in the history of Krynn, Icereach is too harsh and inhospitable a land to foster any grand cultural developments-too often, its inhabitants are concerned with day-to-day survival. The populations that eke out a living here include ice folk (an enclave of human barbarians) and thanoi; the White Dragonarmy has fallen back to this region after their reverses in the War of the Lance. For all its emptiness, Icereach does not lack for linguistic variety. Languages spoken by the natives include Mountain Dwarf, Mountain Barbarian, Ice Barbarian, Kharolian, Silvanesti, Thanoi, Ogre, and even Gnomish. The rare draconian, Ergothian, and goblin natives speak their own tongues.

**Geography:** The continent of Icereach may be no continent at all. Some speculate that Icereach is only ice and no land. Where the continental glaciers begin, just south of Zeriak in the frigid Plains of Dust, land undoubtedly underlies the ice. Farther south, however, the ice becomes nearly a mile thick, its vast face riddled with crevasses and caves that drop away into darkness.

The question of what underlies the glacier dominates the vision quests of human tribesmen of Icereach. Many youths have journeyed into the deep fissures that split the ice, descending, after the first hundred yards, into utter darkness. Those who have returned say they the caves seemed to sink forever downward. Others, who perhaps descended farther, have not returned at all.

**Climate:** Year round, Icewall Glacier is blanketed in chill air and fierce blizzards. In the winter, the sun barely emerges,

rolling like a cool ember across the northern horizon. Even then, blizzards often obscure it. The folk here have grown accustomed to the cold and darkness, but visitors report a creeping melancholy that compels them to seek out the wastes, trying to "get a breath of air." The ice most often claims them.

Scholars speculate that Icewall Glacier formed because the Blood Sea maelstrom, 600 miles away, altered the flow of warming tropical ocean currents.

**Politics:** Two races struggle to survive upon this harsh glacier: evil thanoi (walrus men) and human barbarians. They battle each other and the elements for control of the meager resources of Icereach. The desperate humans have sent envoys to Tarsis and Thorbardin. Such diplomatic efforts have borne little fruit, for northern kingdoms can hardly conceive that any living settlement exists on Icereach.

A third population adds further threat to both humans and thanoi: white dragons. After losses in the War of the Lance, the White Dragonarmy settled upon the central region of Icereach. Here they remain, an army of occupation with almost no civilization to occupy. Ice folk camouflage their encampments from the eyes of patrolling white dragons. If a dragon discovers a settlement, a battle on the ice ensues. The barbarians leap into their ice boats like Blood Sea whalers rushing to the hunt, hoping to lead the attacker away from the camp and slay it with harpoons before it alerts further dragons.

**Trade:** The barbarians' lifestyle of hunting and ice-fishing supplies the food, pelts, and blubber they need to survive. Even so, the ice folk must rely upon Tarsis for metal implements, including harpoon heads, fish hooks, and sled runners. For these items, they trade furs, ivory, ice, meat, and blubber.

The thanoi have no interest in trading.

## Berem Everman



When the jewel-encrusted Foundation Stone of Istar's Temple was returned to Krynn by the god Takhisis, Berem and his sister found it. He attempted to pry a gem from the stone. Arguing with his sister about the wisdom of this course, Berem pushed her. She fell and died. Berem fled with the gem hidden in his shirt pocket. The cursed gem bonded to his flesh, imbedding itself in his chest.

For nearly fifty years, Berem was held prisoner by the Daergar, the dwarves of darkness. Hidden from the eyes of the Dragon Queen, he forgot his identity.

When the Heroes of the Lance freed him, Berem remembered his bitter past-and discovered his unending torture. Berem cannot die. Although he does not expire from any wounds he receives, no matter how massive, he feels the pain of each injury. Berem believes the gemstone in his chest is the source of his regeneration. When his body is healing, the stone glows a brilliant green.

Now Berem wanders the face of Krynn, terrified that his crime will one day be discovered. He also fears the draconians, whom he knows are somehow linked to the master of his mystic gem.

The Everman speaks little. When he does, his voice brims with depression and despair. He does not share knowledge of his special abilities with those he meets.

## Throt

**Culture:** Not truly a nation in its own right, Throt hosts the anarchic anti-culture of savage hobgoblins, goblins, ogres, and trolls. Goblin is the language most frequently spoken, though marauders familiar with Draconian, Lemish, Slig, Giant, and Solamnic abound. A few particular individuals speak Ogre and/or Common. Intending to stay put for a while, the hobgoblins have named Throtl their capital city.

**Geography:** The southern end of the Dargaard Mountains harbors a small forest, which opens out upon a broad and marshy plain named Throt. To the east of this plain lies a mountain pass. Dry hills stretch between the Dargaards and the western Khalkists. It was once the easiest overland route west to Solamnia. Although this mountain pass geographically and politically belongs to Estwilde, it is now called Throtl Gap because the savage races of Throt maraud here without opposition.

**Climate:** The plains of Throt receive more rain than the rest of the Vingaard River basin. The marshy bogs lie in tufted ridges that make agriculture difficult. These same ridges became redoubts for the retreating hobgoblins when the battles turned against them in Solamnia. Summers here last about three months, and winters set in during Phoenix and last until Chislmont.

The forest to the east experiences less rain, but more storms. When warm, humid air from the heartlands of Solamnia meets with cold winds from the peaks of the Dargaard Mountains, storms form. The woods around Throtl tend to flash with lightning from spring to fall, and succumb to blizzards in winter.

The Throtl Gap has the opposite weather—dry and uneventful. The clarity of conditions allows hobgoblin marauders to spot caravans miles away and descend quickly upon them.

**Politics:** Throt has become home of the hobgoblins. During the war, hobgoblin minions of Takhisis fled to this plain when they were routed from Vingaard and Solanthus.

Prior to the War of the Lance, Throt was a sovereign human nation. But it was not a militaristic one. When troubles came, those who wished to fight joined the Solamnic army, leaving their families, the older folk, and the children behind. Thus the fleeing hobgoblins met with little opposition. They destroyed Throt's farms and hamlets, taking the capital city for themselves and banishing or enslaving the folk who lived there.

By the time the pursuing army of Solamnia reached the marshy lands of Throt, their ranks had thinned. Many Solamnians had stayed behind in their own home provinces to rebuild the torn lands. Those present had neither the numbers nor the determination to drive the hobgoblins wholly from Throt.

Slowly, though, the ranks of the Solamnic army are growing for an all-out offensive. The hobgoblins have meanwhile fortified themselves and set up their capital in the mountain city of Throtl.

The hobgoblins have one goal: to hold onto their new homeland at any cost. The despotic hobgoblin king has petitioned the Blue Dragonarmy on his eastern border to defend it if Solamnia attacks. The dragons have quietly agreed, although their motives and loyalties remain clouded to both the humans and the hobgoblins.

Solamnia claims that before the hobgoblin occupation,



Throt had petitioned the government to be made a province of Solamnia. This claim gives Solamnia right to invade and liberate its proto-province. Knights of Solamnia patrol the borders of Throt and elite cavalry units prepare for a campaign of liberation.

**Trade:** Currently, the hobgoblins do not trade. What they have, they took through pillage and plunder. There are plenty of homesteads to loot and livestock left to eat, although the hobgoblins are not willing to tend or husband their captured herds as yet. The capital city of Throtl has grown decadent and rich off goods stolen from caravans that pass through Throtl Gap.

The one commodity these bandits do deal in is information. Hobgoblin spies along the borders of Solamnia trade secrets to the Blue Dragonarmy in return for promises of protection.



When I woke, welcome sunlight streamed into the clearing in golden shafts. Rodephim had a pan sizzling on the fire, and the kender was repacking Hopscotch's saddlebags. The bone shards had disappeared.

The wizard must have noticed my arrested glance. "Enchantment," he explained briefly. "They probably evaporated with the morning dew."

"Forever?"

"Unless we broke the enchantment—which I doubt—they'll be back!" He flipped some hotcakes into a bowl, and extended it to me. When I reached to take it, his other hand shot out and gripped my wrist. As he had done with the spellbook, he ran his fingers over the surface of my skin, almond against walnut. The pad of his thumb followed the tracings of my tattoo.

I didn't know whether to submit or pull away, but then he looked up, into my face.

"Good hands," he said. "Arch your fingers for me. Like that, yes. What's this scar?" Old, almost faded, the line sliced an angle across my longest finger between the second and third joint.

"Whittling. My knife slipped."

"You can read and write?"

"Silvanesti, Common, some High-Elven, a little Ergot." I liked languages, but I was far behind in written communication. I could speak more tongues than that—I told him so. These were that same questions Sendrothalas had asked me, once. Did I dare hope Rodephim was going to accompany us on the quest he set? Did I dare imagine he might teach me?

"How old are you?"

He asked in the same penetrating-yet-offhand tone. I hesitated a fraction too long.

Laughing softly to himself—at himself?—Rodephim wrapped my hand around the cooling bowl. He turned back to cooking.

I tried not to dash the hotcakes to the ground in frustration. Fortunately, Millie returned to the fireside at that moment, ready to fill the air with idle chatter.

"So, I guess I can see why you thought I needed a test, although if you'd just asked, I could have given you references of people I've found things for before. Any good business woman has to have references, dearie, you'll shmmph..." Her mouth full of cake, the kender contented herself with looking knowingly in my direction for a little while.

She swallowed. "You'll see. Delicious hotcakes, Rodephim. But what I don't see is how you got on that pirate ship. Or how you knew we were going to run into each other in Ergot Slice. Unless you were the pirate captain... no, that doesn't explain how you would know which ship to hold up... And what is this you want me to find? I'd think a wizard would keep better track of his belongings, if you don't mind my saying so..."

"I can assure you, I wish I had!"

The look the wizard speared Millie with was as quelling as his tone. She discovered a fascinating grain flaw in the lip of her bowl that occupied her for all of a minute.

"So," the cheerfully nonchalant tone was back full force, "What is it you need me to find?"

Rodephim stood and kicked dirt across the dying cooking fire. The hem of his robe gleamed where gold threads traced

arcane symbols. It was hard to adjust, after knowing him as a pirate, a sailor, a bard, to the long crimson sweep that whispered "magus." He seemed to understand that, or perhaps he wanted to reinforce his station—a learned man, asking two mere adventurers for help.

"I am a member of the Order of the Red Robes. And I need you to find my familiar."

"Your familiar? I thought they were always with you—you know, writhing around your feet, clinging to your shoulder. Stuff like that. How could you lose your familiar?"

"The story is long and complicated by the need for secrecy. No! Millendria, before you ask, I cannot tell you, for more lives than my own hinge on that knowledge. Suffice it to say, that draconians attacked... us, and we were separated. And that is also when I lost Tella."

"Animals run away, sometimes, maybe—"

"Tella did not run away. Tella was taken."

"And you want me to find it, this Tella?" Millie was frankly skeptical. "Why can't you just magic it here?"

"Ah, that magic were as omnipotent as the untutored assume it to be! I'm afraid there are conventions we sorcerers must follow, little one. One cannot just call out to the world and ask it to give back what one has lost. There is finding the object, and learning the place it is kept... Would you reach blind into a darkness you knew to be hostile?" He contemplated the kender's eager, upturned face, her neat tassel of braid, her sparkling moss-green eyes. "Pardon me, I forgot my audience. Of course you would. But I cannot."

"A cat? An owl?" Millie named animals known to take up with magic users.

"A hound." Rodephim shrugged. "We think alike, he and I. The draconians I have eliminated, but they had been with a company of goblins. When I couldn't locate Tella, I thought perhaps—"

"Goblins? They gave your dog to goblins?" The kender stood up and wiped her hands on the sides of her thighs, crestfallen. "You're far too late, dearie. He was lunch, dinner at the outside."

"He lives! I would sense the moment of his death. My only other lead suggested certain Dragon Highlords were interested in hunting for sport. The goblins are ever known to imitate their masters. I believe Tella may have been delivered into their dog pack."

Millie nodded thoughtfully. "But—I guess they wouldn't be thinking it was a magical hound, now would they? Okay, I could see that, dearie. But Highlords, dragonarmies—there's a lot to choose from, in terms of direction." Her interest was piqued, though. Soon, Millie had drawn a quilled leather tube from her backpack, and was unrolling maps in the grass. Some were rather crudely drawn on sheets of vellum. One had a dwarven stamp in the corner, something densely written and very imposing, although I couldn't read the words. Another had been used for notes. Stilted script nearly covered the images the map-maker had recorded.

"Aha! Dearie, I knew I had a map here that would help us. Throt, that's where we want to start." She waved the dingy scroll in a vaguely easterly direction. "Fellow that sold me this map gave me a good price because it wasn't accurate any more, he said. Throt used to be a country, but now it's been overrun by goblins."







I took nearly half the day to work up the courage to talk to the mage. We'd reached the pass not long out of camp. Now we headed down the east slope. This was the dry side of the mountain, and the underbrush thinned out enough that we didn't need to stay strictly on the trail. Butterscotch planted her feet daintily, her nose down as if she were inspecting the ground before stepping on it. At times, I was forced to lean so far back I imagined my shoulders brushing the saddlebags.

We crossed a burbling little stream, and stopped to refill our waterskins.

"I didn't mean anything this morning!" I said it casually, as if continuing a conversation recently left off, not one I had turned over and over in my mind, looking for the offense I might have offered, chewing on the hurt I had automatically taken.

"You still don't trust me." His face was bland; the faint scent of his components blended with the mossy notes of the brook.

I snorted. "You're a tower of trust yourself." He frowned, and I could have kicked myself. This wasn't the way I'd intended the conversation to go.

"I haven't had a lot of experienced at it, trusting." I hurried on. "I thought you might have been going to offer to teach me... and I need to learn."

"You need to learn to trust, first. A simple question was all I asked." He raised an eyebrow, daring me to answer now. I turned away.

"And you spoke of secrets. That question touches on mine."

"I understand that. More, perhaps, than most. But I want to know, and I will not discuss it further until you tell me."

He started to mount up. Goaded, I gritted out my age. "Sixty-six."

Rodephim looked me over assessingly. "Mature, aren't you? Even for a Kagonesti?"

"Half Kagonesti." I felt the words hovering there, buzzing almost. They had stung me so many times. I waited for the look of disgust I'd seen on Sendrothalas' face when he spoke of the half-human who had ensnared the daughter of the Speaker of the Suns.

The wizard didn't move.

"I found some blueberries if—" Millie interrupted herself with a swift glance between us. "Perhaps you don't want to hear about it. Dearie? Don't look like that, Abbra—"

I'm sorry to say I ignored her completely. Anger shook my voice. "Did you hear me? I'm not Kagonesti, I'm half-human. My mother is a druid, not an elf. Now you can laugh. Go ahead, everyone does."

If Rodephim still said nothing, Millie was not so reticent.

"I just duck out for a minute, and suddenly you're shouting loud enough to scare the treefrogs out of the bark! I didn't laugh at you, did I? Of course, I didn't know you were half-human, either, but I don't think I would call it funny. When my uncle Deerbertle wanted to marry that adorable little gnome woman, all anyone could say was 'Think of the children,' as if they didn't want to think of it at all. *That* was funny."

One corner of the wizard's mouth lifted in a reluctant smile. My too-quick temper drained away. These were my friends. Why did I punish them for mistakes they hadn't made?

I took a cleansing breath. "Are you willing to travel with a half-human?"

"Half-elfen," Rodephim corrected quietly. "The rest of the world will call you half-elfen. I'll take the risk. In fact, after we've set up camp tonight, I want you to show me the spells you know. All of them, including your mother's." He smiled, and I at last relaxed my cramping belly muscles.

"Not many people have made acquaintance so broadly in the fields of magic. Druidic rituals, wizardly spells—it's your gift, Abbra. You must explore it."

I can look back at those days on the plains with amusement. After all my griping about the openness and the exposure, my biggest memory of Solamnica is not the landscape. Rather, it is the bold, almost childish script of Sendrothalas's spellbook. I read in the saddle, I read by the tiny cooking fires, I read and reread until my mind was numb. I learned more spells in that one week than in the two years before, or any time since. And I learned a new effortlessness from Rodephim; that was his greatest gift to me. No longer did I struggle and clutch after the power that would create a spell's effect. He taught me to feel the flow of energy more clearly. The image that had haunted me from childhood, a rope, a vine just beyond my grasping fingertips, became instead a strong-welling forest spring. I could hear the water with my deepest awareness. And when I parted the leaves that protected it, it was always there.

Finally, the idyll had to end.

Mud sucked at my boots, and rain drizzled down my neck. I stumbled again on the tufted grass, wanting to shake the kender and demand, "Are we there yet?"

Rodephim hunched against the neck of his mount, dozing by the look of it. Only Millie seemed unperturbed by the ceaseless wet.

The kender pulled out the map, swiped at it with her handkerchief, rubbed the top surface against her left hip, and sighed happily.

"Well, dearie, I think we're just about here. Once we find the river..."

"Millie, you've said that how many times already?" Butterscotch butted noses with Hopscotch. I tried to discern a riverbed in the vast, rainsoaked swampy greenness. Was that notch in the grassline a dip in the ground contour, or break where a path wound through? Or was it just the random hummocking of the Chislev-blessed grass? I stared, willing the rain to let up just a little, so that I could actually see something.

The rain didn't let up. But the notch jiggled, swayed, and burst open to disgorge three, four, five lumpy, sodden shapes. They thrashed about in the thick plumes of grass, and finally disappeared back the way they had come.

"I think we're there."

The figures were too indistinct in the streaming rain to positively identify by species, but the goblinkin have a characteristic shamle.

"I don't think they saw us, do you?"

"Goblins can't walk and think at the same time, dearie." Millie proclaimed scornfully. "Shall we follow them?" She was already tugging Hopscotch forward.

The five goblins—they turned out to be the simple, four-foot-tall goblins, once we got up closer—led us at last out of the marshy plain, and into a thick, damp wood. They seemed totally unconcerned about followers and ambushes, and we soon saw why. Whatever structures we did pass were empty wrecks. Whether burned or smashed or simply looted, the



houses and homesteads made it clear we were deep into enemy territory now. When the flapping goblin march ended, we were surveying an enormous, once-attractive hunting lodge. Whatever human had built the structure had spared no expense. Great stone blocks had been cut to fit snugly together. The doorways arched gracefully over heavy oaken doors.

Of course, offal and rotting meat now decorated what had once been a garden, and the banner that draped the flagpole looked to be an animal's head. A yipping cacophony suggested that there were plenty of dogs for us to search through.

Sobered, we backed off a ways and made a cold camp under a lightning-blazed pine. Using the deadfall and some living branches, I wove a shelter large enough to include the horses as well, and we huddled in the steamy, animal-scented warmth and debated our plan of attack.

"First thing to do, we need a distraction," Millie suggested enthusiastically. "You know, like a big noise, or smoke or something you magicians figure out. While all the goblins are trying to discover out where the smoke is coming from, I'll be—"

"You'll be standing watch," Rodephim said, his voice firm.

The kender woman shook her head, "No, I'm much better at the sneaking-into-things part than at the watching and waiting. Especially the waiting. So when I get to the dogs, I'll signal you with my hoopak. That's when Abbra—you know, I once saw a traveling magician turn an ordinary scone lamp into a dragon's head that breathed fire. I don't suppose..."

"No, Millie! I can't. Now if you're not going to be serious, at least be quiet. Make yourself useful." I didn't intend to hurt

her feelings, and I know better, now, than to use stock phrases like 'make yourself useful.'

"Let's not make this so kenderplex it hasn't a prayer of working," Rodephim agreed.

Then, I saw the crumpled pout, and figured I'd apologize later. Neither Rodephim nor I noticed the kender slip out.

It wasn't much later when the fidgetless quiet finally impinged on my brain. Rodephim was describing Tella's markings, so that we would know him if we found him first, and I realized our little friend hadn't said anything, relevant or irrelevant, for a long while. Hopscotch whickered softly. I peered into the gloom, seeing only the great, red shapes of the animals. It was the calm before the storm.

"Where's Millie?"

The wizard drew a quick breath. "I assumed..."

Outside, there was a whoop like an elf youngster startling grouse. Something small, possibly kender-sized, hurtled past. Close on its heels flapped a crew of goblins. Rodephim locked eyes with me, horrified. It had definitely been kender-sized then.

"What's she doing?" The sounds of pursuit were fading. As one, we moved out of the little camouflaged shelter.

It didn't take long for us to catch up. Millie had climbed a tree, and the goblin patrol was debating whether to cut it down, or burn it. The leader, a big hobgoblin in tight chain mail, thrust his spear up into the branches. She harangued them from the upper boughs with taunts about their parentage and the dislocation of their internal organs. Rodephim sighed, and pulled out a small pinch of sand. "*Ast tasarak sinularan krynawi*," he murmured, spilling the grains in a small arc. As if he had touched them, one by one the hobgoblin and his goblin troops slumped over in sleep.

"And you pick your mother's scabs, too—Hey, are you listening to me?" A rustling, a scrape of bark, and she was on the ground, examining the snoring troops.

"Fancy that! I've discovered a way to put goblins-oh! I guess you might have had something to do with it."

I glared. I was sure the wizard's expression was equally thunderous.

"Well, you said do something useful, so I was just going to see how many guards there were—they're really on alert, too. It's going to be hard to just sneak in. I think we should tie these goblins up, by the way, so they don't get back to warn the others..."

We tied them, Rodephim muttering about stirring hornet's nests. On the long, circuitous walk back to our camp, I contemplated whether it might be better to use the same strategy on Millie. But the wizard's mood had lightened. As we ate our supper of trail bread and jerky, Rodephim outlined his plan.

Darkness hadn't fallen so much as it had deepened the gloom of an already miserable day. Though the rain had ceased, every leaf and limb dribbled on. These random splashes made me jumpy and the kender uncharacteristically hesitant. It was more unnerving to think the goblins might be patrolling, and we'd never hear them. Millie pulled out her little band light and rubbed until it glowed.

"Are you sure—"

"I don't intend to walk around in circles all night!" Her hair plastered in bedraggled threads against her skin, Millie looked as miserable as I felt. "There. Now I'm sure the humans built a back door into the stables, they always do."

I put my hand to my bow for perhaps the dozenth time as

water splattered loudly to our left.

Squirrel, probably. I glanced at the kender, her hands glowing in the light, a drop of water jewel-like on the end of her nose. She rubbed it away with the back of her sleeve.

I don't know what made me look back at the woods just then. I didn't think it was a sound. It might have been a whiff on the moist breeze. Anyway, I looked.

The spatter hadn't recorded a squirrel's passing after all. As I had been anticipating, as I had been dreading, a goblin had found us.

"Millie..." I said through clenched teeth, even as I swung my bow up.

The peculiar, rotting odor that distinguishes goblin hygiene wafted over us as he took two steps closer. His curved sword raised menacingly, he glared at the light. The kender tucked the glowing ball into a pouch, and darkness lunged around us. My elvensight took a moment to kick in, even though the hand light had been dim. I nocked an arrow. Millie moved against my back—where there was one goblin, there were usually half a dozen more. Sure enough the fellow we saw, apparently realizing we were intruders at last, let out a bellow. This time I heard the jingling of ring armor, the snap of boughs.

"Darn, only four apiece? I hardly think this is sporting!" Millie taunted.

They rushed us.

My arrow took the first goblin in the shoulder with a solid thunk. Millie's hoopak whined and thwacked something hollow. Hit one in the head, I guessed. I tried to get my bow in line with the next one, but he was already too close. The goblin's blade sheared through the arrow as I was drawing it back. While his arm was down, I kicked at his wrist sideways, the way his elbow wasn't supposed to bend.

There were too many of them. Millie hit something again, but I heard her sharp intake of breath soon after.

"Hurt bad?" I gasped over my shoulder. Another goblin lunged at me, and I dodged his thrust to wrap my fingers around his wrist. I said an ancient word, and power welled up in me like lightning in a thundercloud. The jolt tossed him back, yelping in pain. "Millie?"

I risked a glance at her: she was swinging wildly with the butt end of her forked stick, but she was down on one knee. I thought of Rodephim, wading into the skeletons for me. I could wish he was here now.

"What's going on out here? What's the racket?" a gravelly voice shouted. One of our attackers shouted back for the captain to come over here.

"Well, don't kill it till I get there, then!" Our goblins pulled back from the fight. I was amazed they obeyed, and thankful for the respite. "Millie?"

"Just a bruise, dearie, stupid goblin fell on my foot. Now, I know a helm protects you in a sword fight, but I'd no idea that dropping it on my toes would be so painful. Do you suppose that's why they put the spikes and knobs and stuff on them?"

I was watching the approaching torches, not knowing quite what to expect.

The captain of the guard towered head and shoulders over the sniveling ranks of our attackers. Hobgoblin, just like the one in the woods. We rarely saw the larger goblinkin at home in Southern Ergoth. Studying this one, I was grateful.

Rolls of flesh oozed over the top of his sword belt and squeezed against the rings of his chain-mail shirt. Apparently,

the hobgoblin saw no point in wearing cloth beneath his armor. It looked like the strain of holding in all that gray, scabrous weight was too much—several links were stretched open, creating gaps in the protective fabric.

"What have we here?" The big monster reached for the kender with its pudgy paw.

Millie brandished her hoopak stick, and the creature decided not to force the issue by patting her.

"I caught them, Captain. They're mine to kill! They're mine!" The goblin who spoke wasn't the first we'd encountered—the one wearing one of my arrows as a souvenir. He did, however, set off a general clamor of counterclaims and demands of precedence. I wasn't at all sure I liked being the tablescrap.

"Silence!" the hobgoblin roared. The babble subsided into snuffles and snorts and absent-minded scratching.

"We will take them to the dungeon and torture them for their plans. The general may choose what to do with them."

There was some grumbling—the gist of it being the general got all the fun, and what he didn't know wasn't likely to hurt him—but we had gotten a reprieve of sorts. Millie limped along, leaning on the hoopak like a cane, and they forgot it was a weapon. My bow, they took. I wondered if I'd get to make another one.

The dungeon seemed to be the former root cellar of the lodge. Millie speculated that the corridor we glimpsed briefly led to the kitchens. There were no bars, no racks, no iron cuffs chained to the massive stone blocks. We were thrust into a musty, cabbage scented darkness. A stout oak door slammed shut. A key clanked in the lock.

And we were alone. A rustle, the friction of hands on crystal, and Millie had her hand light glowing again. A huge grin split her face.

"Didn't I tell you, dearie? Easy as taking candy from a gully dwarf. Getting out again will be just as painless."

Her flippant comment reminded me of her injury. "Is your foot all right?"

The delighted kender danced a jig, throwing crazy shadows with the hand light. "What foot? You don't think I'd let one of those smelly goblins actually touch me, do you? Even their blood is poisonous. Isn't this the most?" Her attention turned to the stone walls, the thick door. Immediately she was consumed with the business of the lock. I listened to footsteps flapping back and forth overhead, but the voices were too muffled to make anything out.

Before I could get nervous, a thin shaft of light stabbed into our cell, dimming the glow of the hand light. Millie had picked the lock.

"Got it, dearie. Now don't be a Doubting Trapspringer, that Tella dog is in here somewhere, and it won't take me but two shakes of a lamb's tail to find him. Be right back!"

Without her marigold cloak (she'd left it in a convincing sleeping posture draped over her backpack in the corner), the kender woman was anonymous in a short rabbit fur jerkin and loose brown breeches. A little thin for a goblin, perhaps.

"Wait, Millie!" I hissed, gesturing to the ceiling. The steps above hadn't stopped, or settled into any pattern. There was still a lot of activity upstairs. "Wouldn't it be better to wait until the place has settled down?"

"Better to go now, when they're not expecting. I'll be quiet."

Then I was alone in the darkness. I wondered how Rodephim was making out. I tried again to decipher the muffled



conversation overhead. If I could get closer... The ceiling, or rather, the floor of the room above, was heavy, wide planks of oak laid across waist-thick beams. In the center of my cell, a joist reached up to support the beam. If I could climb up that, somehow, and get my ear up to the wood?

I realized the steps overhead had ceased, and in the next instant discovered to my horror that they were instead slapping down the hollow stairs-coming here! Not just one goblin guard, making the rounds, but the heavy shuffle of hobgoblins. The captain? Worse?

Where was that kender?

The door swung open, and smoky torchlight streamed in, temporarily blinding me.

A goblin guard placed himself menacingly across my only escape route. "His Mighteousness Sluggut, The High Emperor of Throt, General of the Armies, will review the prisoners."

The hobgoblin captain squeezed into the cellar, overwhelming the cabbage odor with more noxious fumes. Behind him stood the fattest hobgoblin I had ever seen. Pink eyes glared under a tight velvet cap that must have once been a human noble's. A crushed velvet cloak, meant to convey stately fullness on a smaller frame, stretched forlornly across one shoulder. The ruffles and lace of his shirt sported greasy stains.

"Call them to attention!" His Mighteousness demanded. The captain clapped his hands together sharply. I stood straighter, but of course, Millie's cape didn't move. The captain's eyes narrowed to porcine slits. On the side away from the self-styled emperor, his hand signaled a question.

Relief threatened to turn my knees to water. It was Rodephim. He'd taken the shape of the hobgoblin we'd put to sleep, after all.

"Millie!" I hissed overtly, and managed to shrug. We hadn't planned for this contingency. I hoped he could think what to say.

Then the emperor's cloak twitched at the hem, the hobgoblin grunted in surprise, and Millendria Gemgetter crawled between his ponderous calves back into the cell.

"Will you look at what you dropped-"

"Millie, I told you not to crawl around on the floor! People will step on you!" Perhaps we could convince the emperor she'd been in the cell all along?

"Silence!" the Emperor roared. He craned to see past his enormous gut as the kender palmed some bauble from one of her pouches. It was shiny, that's all I could tell. When she held it out to him, he slapped it from her hand. Turning to the captain, the bigger hobgoblin demanded angrily, "A kender and an elf? These are your prisoners?"

"I thought Your Mighteousness was interested in perfecting your hunting technique, and game has been scarce!"

Millie had dusted herself off. While the captain and the noble exchanged words, I queried low, "Did you find him?"

"I didn't get time," she whined, a little too shrilly. The captain's head cocked toward us. I squeezed her shoulder in warning. Too late. "The huntmaster was feeding-"

"So, you are interested in my hounds!" the emperor belowered, leaning leeringly forward. "You shall have the opportunity to meet them! Captain, perhaps you have been brighter than usual. Notify the huntmaster that you are in charge of tomorrow's entertainment-" He paused, grinning evilly. "Let us make it more sporting. Let us hunt tonight."

My breath caught; I forced myself to remain still. If the hunt was tonight, when would Millie get the chance to find

Rodephim's familiar? We couldn't trust to chance that the hound would be among those the huntmaster selected to pursue us. I found myself staring at the hobgoblin captain. His brow furrowed painfully, and I wondered suddenly if shapechangers were hampered by the slower wit of the guises they assumed. What if Rodephim could only think as fast as a hobgoblin?

"If it please your Mighteousness, may I choose the dogs?" he asked obsequiously.

The emperor's little pink eyes narrowed. Finally, a greasy grin enveloped his face. His chins jiggled with silent laughter. "Our pleasure is infinite. You may do so."

The emperor's being creaked as he turned ponderously from the cell. "We will meet in the yard at Solinari-rise."

The white moon was waning, a thinning crescent in the sky. The scudding rain clouds drew back now and then, allowing shafts of unhindered light. Somehow, the goblins had stuffed their emperor into a mismatched suit of armor, and found a war-horse stout enough to carry the burden.

Rodephim—the hobgoblin captain—stood in the midst of a swirling, yipping mass of dogs. He pointed one flabby arm, and a goblin came forward to hand over the leash-straining animal. He pointed again. A dog leapt for his hand, and was jerked back. His gesture said, that one, too.

Nerves made my breathing shallow, my shoulders tense. Our plan was back on track now. To get out, we only had to separate ourselves from the pack. His familiar at hand, Rodephim would use a powerful spell to transport us back to our camp in the woods. The goblins would never find their quarry.

"Which one do you think—" Millie broke off as I trod on her foot. That runaway tongue of hers was going to give us away! I didn't think it had occurred to the goblins to wonder why we were marauding in a known goblin haunt—just the two of us—but I knew some of them at least understood Common.

Our goblin guards prodded us in the back. The time to start the hunt was here.

The emperor rode his already-sweating steed closer. Captain Rodephim gathered the straining dogs' leashes into both fists, and leaned back against the weight of his charges. The emperor grinned maliciously. "I honor you by allowing you to ride at my side. If we catch your treasures, you win a promotion, captain. If we don't, I think we might hunt captains, instead. Give the creatures fifty paces head start!"

We took off running, stumbling through the tufted heathgrass. The day's rainfall still stood in puddles everywhere, making the going slippery. At least the dogs had trouble, too.

"This way, Millie," I panted, heading for a ridge. The steep ground was easier for us—we could use our hands to climb, and kick rocks and mud into the faces of the animals. They were still gaining on us.

"Which one is Tella again? I don't think this fellow is too friendly," Millie gasped, swinging her hoopak to ward off the snarling jaws that lunged for her ankles.

I saved my breath. Rodephim had promised that he would disguise us as animals—I had my doubts now as to whether that was really the best defense. It had seemed so reasonable at the time. Behind us, the riders came on.

Even as I twisted to avoid the leaping animal behind me, it seemed to hang an instant in mid-air. A shimmering field engulfed it. The dog became a summer hare. But wasn't that

what Rodephim had said he was going to change us into? The creature on Millie's heels shimmered, too, and she was being run down by a chattering red squirrel.

"What the—" My voice barked alarmingly. Millie was gone! My tongue lolling with exertion... My tongue?! I twisted to look at myself, and saw the sleek, black haunches of a hunting hound scrabbling up the ridge. Scents bloomed as my new senses registered the dog pack, the musk of rabbit, the tangy wet.

Below, the pack had stopped running, and were milling about. Some tried to follow us up the ridge. Others, noses down, searched as if they had lost the scent. When I saw the hare casting around, I realized it still had doggish instincts. But the other hounds weren't so sure.

A big, brindled mutt turned sharply on the squirrel. The squirrel bounded off. With a loud woof, the brindle, and several black hounds who looked like me, gave chase.

Now the hunters had nearly come up to us. The hare, still milling with the pack of dogs it thought it was part of, cut under the emperor's horse. He barely retained his seat, but his attention had been drawn down.

"People assume we're stupid, captain, but we're actually very cunning." The hobgoblin emperor's voice wheezed and gasped his exertion. He wiped lather from his horse's withers, and licked it from his hand. "I think there's more to these prisoners than you might guess. They weren't scared, were they? I wanted them to be trembling in fear, and they didn't cringe."

One more hound had made the slithering climb up the ridge. I bared my teeth in query, and he stretched his front legs low. Tella? I sniffed him. It was the familiar.

His Mighteousness' eyes scanned over the field. The hare at his feet growled back at the dogs pressing close to it, and they cringed back, confused. "And now I don't see our quarry. Do they have a plan? Where could they hide?"

The tension exploded. The hare leapt away, dogs streaming after it. I trembled with the urge to give chase, too. Fighting his dancing mount, the hobgoblin roared grotesquely. "They have used magic! After them!" He pointed to the hare.

I think Rodephim might have used his pirouetting mount to avoid joining the rush, but I had other things on my mind at the time. Millie, yipping excitedly, was trying to join the fleeing hunt. Tella tackled her with a growl, and the two dogs tumbled off the ridge in a snarling, snapping ball.

A peculiar queasiness shook me for a moment, and then I realized I was seeing through my own eyes. The thick musks of dog and horse receded again. The kender found herself suddenly abandoned. Rodephim, human again, calmed his leaping hound as Tella tired to lick his master's face smooth.

My ears still rang with the thunder of hooves and hounds, though the rest of the hunting party was moving out of earshot.

"Phew!" I shivered all down my body. No tail to wag. The sensation was odd. "I'm for leaving right away!" We weren't in a very sheltered location. The wizard nodded, still calming his familiar. Millie babbled happily about her dog's perspective.

"Everyone must stand close together, here. We must be touching." Rodephim gently prodded the dog's haunches into a sit. Millie nudged closer, and I reached out to grasp her hand, the pounding of my heart loud as hoofbeats. Rodephim started to intone the words of his spell. I shushed Millie. Breaking his concentration when he was casting might have serious consequences. And I wanted to learn this spell someday. I focussed on the words.

And almost missed the hobgoblin emperor creeping up be-



hind us. Tella whined. The nauseating scent of sweating goblin filled the air. I swung around to see his hideous leer widen as he raised a broad-bladed axe!

I just reacted, there was no time to think. I let go of Millie's hand, mumbling the words of my own spell as I hit the ground in front of the hobgoblin. His reach was far longer than mine. But he was standing in a puddle.

My fingers touched the water as the power welled in me. I heard the crackle and pop of the shocks, saw wisps of blue fire dance over his wet chain mail. With a cry, the emperor toppled backwards. Millie grabbed my foot.

The jolt of teleportation is not always physical. One moment we were standing in the muddy grass, the next we were back at the lightning-struck pine. Exhausted, nevertheless Rodephim gathered us together as fast as possible, and winked us all again.

This time we stood in the deep gloom of an ancient forest. Millie shivered, and tightened her cloak. The wizard sank down to the forest floor. Whining, Tella licked his master's hand.

"No goblins?" I asked, looking around the chill darkness.

"No goblins. Thanks to you, little Kagonesti." His eyes said a great deal more. I ducked away from his gaze.

"So I want to know!" The kender's shrill voice seemed to stab at the darkness. "Where'd you take us to? We sure aren't in Solamnia any more."

Rodephim's tone was dry. He seemed almost to be laughing. "You're not the only one who can find things, kender. We've come to the Forest of Wayreth."

I trembled. Millie whooped.

"I found the Tower of High Sorcery!"

## Estwilde

**Culture:** Each village and tribe is sovereign in Estwilde, and systems of governance vary from tribe to kingdom to khanate. The dregs of Krynn are gathered here, including evil humans, goblin races, ogres, giants, centaurs, and Neidar (hill dwarves). Estwilde, the language of the mountain barbarians, is one of the most frequently spoken. Other common tongues include Goblin and Ogre. Less frequently, a visitor might get by with Nordmaarian, Draconian, Hill Dwarf, or even Solamnic. Centaurs are the smallest minority.

**Geography:** Estwilde occupies the broad, hilly basin between the Dargaard Mountains and the northeastern Khalkists. Unlike the smooth and verdant plains of Solamnia to its west, Estwilde harbors dry grasslands, rugged foothills, pine forests, and high mountains. Only tough grazing animals such as goats can subsist on this rugged feed.

In the north lie the Woods of Lahue, whose wiry trees form a dense forest against the Astivar Mountains. Reports indicate that a goblin empire may be forming here. Also, a pink-skinned, blonde-furred race of human cannibals called the Lahutians dwells in these woods. None knows whether or not they feed on goblins.

Although Estwilde technically extends south all the way to the lush seaboard of New Sea, the rugged and arid land known as the Throtl Gap all but chokes off this section from the northern half of the country. Furthermore, the Blue Dragonarmy currently occupies southern Estwilde, which it captured during the War of the Lance.

**Climate:** Like the neighboring lands of Neraka and Kern, Estwilde suffers under severe weather for most of the year. During the summer months from Bran to Hiddumont, the Northern Courrain Ocean pours hot and steamy air onto this broad plain, though rarely does rain result. Despite the high

humidity, the grasses remain dead and dry. After an occasional summer downpour, the whole rugged countryside becomes green for a fortnight. Then, it dries out again.

Winter brings severe storms roaring across the wasteland. Thunder and lightning during furious blizzards are not an uncommon phenomenon.

**Politics:** The folk of Estwilde are a mixed lot: large masses of surly and treacherous humans who habitually traffic with the goblin races, ogres, and other nasties that wander down from the Khalkists. These disparate and selfish people despise and fear the faint-hearted Solamnians to their west. They also despise the Blue Dragonarmy, which has captured their south lands.

The Solamnians and the Blue Dragonarmy push Estwilde toward alliance with Sanction, Neraka, and Khur.

**Trade:** The folk of Estwilde distrust outsiders and perform little trade. Their cheeses, beef, goat meat, grains, and spices are inferior and are therefore consumed locally. A bitter powder named koko brings some limited trade. Brigands and bandits make the chief contact with the outside world, plaguing caravan routes between Nordmaar and Solamnia. The rest of Estwilde's folk keep to themselves and tend their goats. Most lack the imagination to believe they need more than what their squalid lives offer.

## Bakaris



Bakaris speaks in a sullen and angry tone. The Blue Dragon Lieutenant is a handsome, dark man who is more devoted to the Blue Lady than to the rest of the dragonarmy.

Bakaris fights like a berserker in battle. His wild nature and fearsome temper forced him to flee his native lands: in a fight over a woman, he killed the son of a noble. Time has not brought him any significant measure of control.

Bakaris met the Blue Lady early in her career and realized that she would quickly rise to power. He planned to rise with her. She recognized his weaknesses but realized that as long as Bakaris's interests were linked to her own, she could trust him. He does not entirely trust her, either: she is too willing to touch off his jealous temper when she wants a bit of excitement.



## Taman Busuk

**Culture:** Many of the evil dregs of Ansalon have been gathering in Taman Busuk. The population has swelled to include humans from many nations, the Blue Dragonarmy, ogres, barbarians, and goblins. The language of greed and fear is dominant, whether the speaker uses Draconian, Nerakese, Dragon, Mountain Barbarian, Solamnic, Lemish, Nordmaarian, Khur, Ogre, or Goblin. Two capital cities, Sanction and Neraka, seethe with power and intrigue under the dictatorship of Dragon Highlord Ariakus.

**Geography:** Although Taman Busuk as a nation is weak, it contains some of the most mystically and militarily powerful sites on Ansalon: **Sanction**, **Neraka**, and **Gargath**, as well as the ruins of **Codshome**. (The history and importance of Sanction warrants a separate entry. See "Sanction.") Mountains and sterile soil fragment the nation of Taman Busuk geographically, and Takhisis and the Blue Dragonarmy fragment it politically. But Takhisis prefers the country to be so divided: thus, none can stand against her.

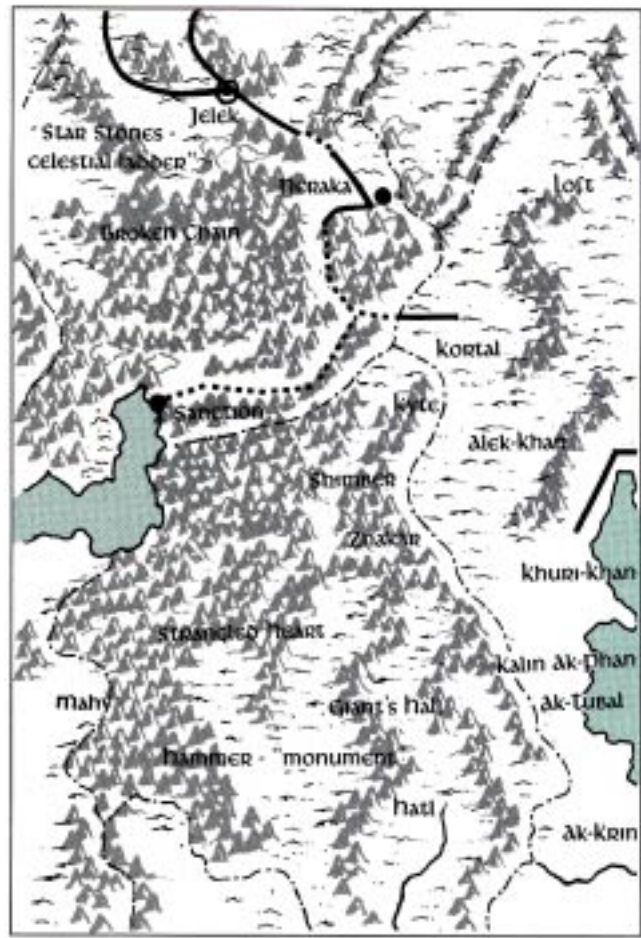
In the north, Taman Busuk borders Estwilde and Kern and in the south it borders Zhakar. Throughout its length, rugged and barren mountains stripe the land. The mountains in the north contain huge slabs of granite-igneous shafts of former volcanoes that were forced into splintery ranges when the Cataclysm struck. Between these mountains lie wide valleys of grassy wasteland. In the south, the mountains become much more dense and the valleys disappear entirely. Here, thirteen volcanoes remain active. The lava flows of three of them reach into the very heart of the Dark Queen's occupied city of Sanction. Neraka, also, is surrounded by volcanoes, though they stand at a greater distance.

The ragged Khalkist Mountains house more than just evil sites. The mystic sites of Godshome and the ancient city of Gargath lie in these mountains also. Godshome is a bowl-shaped depression in a mountain top. At the center lies a huge, polished circle of black rock, surrounded by an oddly shaped ring of boulders. Clearly, this site is not natural but celestial in origin. Here, the companions discovered the true nature of Fizban and witnessed Paladine's epiphany.

The ancient tower of Gargath is also said to lie nearby, where the Graystone was contained for a time and where the kender and tinker gnomes came into being. Even so, tales tell of at least five different locations for the Tower of Gargath. Most of the tales point to a site in the upper Khalkists, but perhaps the residue of chaos from the Graystone has cursed the tower to wander.

**Climate:** Summers in Taman Busuk last four months and remain temperate, due to the elevation. Also due to the height above sea level, the land receives little rain, making the stony mountains fairly barren. In the four months from Phoenix to Mishamont, the land grows quite chill and snows pile higher than a man's head. Only sites near volcanoes escape the accumulation of snow. It is said that when Neraka has snow, Sanction has rain.

**Politics:** Neraka is ruled indirectly by Takhisis herself. The city arose 141 years after the Cataclysm, when Takhisis planted the cornerstone of the Kingpriest's temple in a remote glade. By patient magic, the cornerstone grew into a new temple—the twisted Temple of Darkness where Takhisis could muster and rally her servants. The city around the temple grew up only to serve the Dark Queen and her minions. Outside the city lie barracks for the five dragonarmies she



commands.

When travelers discovered the city, they mistook it for the "Lost City of Neraka," a mountain city destroyed by the Cataclysm. Those who escaped Takhisis's minions spread news of the city of "Neraka." Takhisis, wishing to hide her purposes, was content to let her capital of Evil be so called.

Needless to say, no good comes out of Neraka. Takhisis has sent her Evil minions south to strike an alliance with Khur, hoping to unify against the traitorous ogres of Kern and the Knights of Solamnia. The dwarves of Zhakar occasionally raid Neraka, and the Nerakans willingly sponsor forays to explore and spy on the Zakharans' underground city.

Godshome has no ruler lest it be Paladine himself, and Gargath is only a small settlement clustered about the ruined tower.

**Trade:** Neraka and Sanction run a thriving trade in slaves, mercenaries, and weaponry with each other, Khur, and Zhakar. The dwarves of Zhakar barter with small gems, and the nomads of Khur offer fine warhorses, exotic spices, and artifacts from the Lost Cities of Istar. Sanction also deals in lime and llamas and serves as a point of entry for much stolen or black-market merchandise, which it trades through Neraka to the northern reaches of Taman Busuk. The nomadic barbarians of the north barter for these goods with mutton and wool.



## Sanction

**Culture:** Sanction is a population in transition. The humans who used to live here have for the most part been driven out. Their replacements are the Blue Dragonarmy, ogres, and giants. Draconian has become the lingua franca, with many also comfortable speaking Dragon, Common, Nerakese, Ogre, and Goblin. Isolated pockets of Kyrie and Solamnic still exist.

**Geography:** Outside of Sanction, stark red rock makes up the towering mountains. Above the timberline, lichens, mosses, and scrub plants slowly crack the stone, creating soil for larger plants. Few creatures live upon these heights: groundhogs, eagles, and such beasts as can survive cold, desolate places.

Below the timberline, tenacious pines wrap their sinewy roots about the red boulders, further decomposing them. The region is by no means lush: the poor soil and arid climate preclude thick forests. Here, most of the Khalkist beasts choose to lair.

Sanction lies in the literal grip of three volcanoes: the Lords of Doom, principal peaks of the volcanic Doom Range. Arms of lava have reached numerous times from the volcanoes down into the city. These lava flows have destroyed large segments of the town. The folk of Sanction have compensated, building bridges that span the areas of molten rock.

**Climate:** The city of Sanction has a climate of extremes. The volcanoes provide constant and uneven heat through winter and summer. During the "cold" season, snow stands in some areas while others swelter next to superheated stone. When streams of lava periodically reach the harbor, goutts of steam erupt into the sky, blanketing the city with a sulfuric mist. The mist freezes wherever it alights, leaving the buildings of Sanction crusted with an ash-laden shroud of ice.

In the summer, the volcanoes only intensify the heat of the sultry air. When rains do come, the volcanoes belch such steam that a miasmatic cloud drifts over the city.

**Politics:** Once a human city, Sanction fell to a blockade of dragonarmy ships during the War of the Lance. The Blue Dragonarmy took hold of the land, establishing Sanction as Takhisis's port city. As its citizens fled to the mountains, goblins, hobgoblins, ogres, minotaurs, trolls, draconians, and hill giants set up camps around the city perimeters. Some even entered Sanction to claim the abandoned buildings there.

Since his surrender to Takhisis, the Lord Governor of Sanction has become merely a figurehead. Although he has proclaimed official welcome to the Dark Queen's forces, his is a city under siege. In addition to social collapse and looting by the evil forces of the Dark Queen, the physical structures of the city are rapidly disappearing under new lava flows. The Lord Governor has secretly sent mercenaries and adventurers to scout a new site for a capital city and purge it of any fell beasts. He offers huge bounties especially to those who slay blue dragons.

Nomads and pirates from Khur, Neraka, and Lemish all seek alliances with Sanction, but the Lord Governor is too busy trying to save his seat from the various destroyers within to worry about alliance without.

**Trade:** A triangle of shipbuilding, piracy, and slavery extends from Sanction to Lemish and Neraka. Occasionally Sanction purchases gems and armor from the dwarves of Zhakar, using slaves as the currency. Other products from Sanction include obsidian, pumice, tar, and granite.

## Ariakus



Dragon Highlord Ariakus does not speak; he proclaims. His every word is an edict, and he expects every word to be obeyed. Ariakus is the personification of ambitious evil.

Ariakus's major weakness is his arrogance. He has such great power that he tends to underestimate his opponents. His overconfidence in his abilities prevents him from giving others credit for having skills of their own. Thus, his plans may contain flaws that a clever enemy could capitalize upon.

Ariakus was a brilliant warrior in his younger days. When he discovered the pure evil of the Dark Queen, however, he immediately cast aside the study of combat to dedicate himself to her service. His power has risen accordingly. He is the Highlord in command of the Red Dragonarmy, the most powerful of the five armies of Takhisis. The red army has also been the most successful in its campaigns. Ariakus is the governor of all lands taken by his forces. These include Sanction, Abanasinia, Qualinost, and Tarsis. Now that Ariakus is the Emperor, he answers only to Takhisis herself.

## Verminaard



Verminaard speaks in a smooth, seductive voice that can charm and calm those around him. He is an extremely charismatic and diplomatic man-when he wants to be. He can also turn into a bloodthirsty beast when thwarted. Verminaard lives for the destruction of all

that is good.

Like all other Dragon Highlords, Verminaard is completely ruthless in battle. He offers no quarter and accepts surrender only to make his job easier. As often as not, he kills those who surrender to him. He glories in bloodshed and slaughter. In short, he is the perfect commander for the dragonarmies.

Verminaard was just a minor mercenary when the Dark Queen first appeared to him and offered him power in return for service. He saw in her a leader who could offer him the power, blood, and destruction for which he hungered. She saw a man with no conscience or shred of mercy to weaken his actions in her cause.

Verminaard's only worry is the Blue Lady, whose ambition and hunger for power exceeds even his own. He discounts his main minion, Toede, as too incompetent and cowardly to be a real threat. This could well be his undoing.

## **Zhakar (Thoradin)**

**Culture:** A reclusive and mysterious race of dwarves, the Zakhar, have taken over the abandoned halls of Thoradin. The people call themselves Zakhar, meaning “cursed ones,” and their land Zhakar, meaning “cursed place.” An ancient mold plague had disfigured these people and made them outcasts of dwarven culture.

They speak Mountain Dwarf and Ogre extensively, and many are fluent in Goblin and Draconian.

**Geography:** The nation of Zhakar stands in the shadows of the ancient dwarven nation of Thoradin. After six centuries of civilization in Thoradin, the Hylar dwarves left to delve a new kingdom, which they named Thorbardin. By 2000 PC, the roads into Thoradin were lost.

A millennium later, dwarves from Thorbardin returned to the Khalkist Mountains to establish a trading post with Istar. They named their new trading colony Thoradin after the lost kingdom. The new Thoradin became the chief trading post for Thorbardin, Istar, and Palanthus. It had the potential of rivaling the old Thoradin until the Cataclysm obliterated it.

Zhakar, the latest dwarven civilization in the Khalkists, is located in the center of the thickest tangle of mountains in the range.

**Climate:** The lofty peaks and granite cliffs of Zhakar are dry and fairly barren. In a few spots, high tarns from ancient glaciers provide water to the rocky heights. Around these areas, trees struggle to root among the white boulders, and eagles build their nests. Through the rest of the ranges, scrub, sage, and cactus populate the dry ledges. Summer stretches more than four months, from late Bran to early Reorxmont. Winter extends from Phoenix to Mishamont. Little snow and little rain fall at any time during the year, though the summer wind is often blustery due to updrafts off the hot faces of stone.

**Politics:** The Zakhar have a king and a council of prelates who handle all matters within their kingdom. The state's rigid system of caste and occupation structures the reclusive folk for one aim: creating an underground nation that rivals Thorbardin in strength. They plan to regain control of the whole Khalkist mountain range. Every action of their dark days targets this one aim, as though their destiny were instinctual. The dwarves show no passion in the pursuit of this monomania, only a cold, pragmatic discipline.

Numerous reports indicate that the Zakhar slay any non-Zakhar folk who enter their city. Some even say that the dwarves turn to the Dark Queen and other gods of Evil for aid.

**Trade:** This subterranean kingdom of dwarves in the Khalkist Mountains manages to do some quiet trade with Sanction. Items include gems, metals, arms and armor, coins, mushrooms, and spirits.

## **Dragon Isles and Misty Isles**

**Culture:** Although it is tempting to lump the varied populations of these small islands into one group, in fact, they are too diverse to be classified as one culture. The City of Gold, capital of Misty Isle, and the center of that island's intellectual community, is the area's most natural cultural lode-stone. Just as there is no one dominant culture, there is no one dominant language, with conversation just as frequent in Draconian or Common as it is in Gnomish, Kalinese, and even Dragon. What forms of government these peoples practice is unknown, although there is speculation that the dragons favor oligarchy.

**Geography:** These eight isles lie in a band some 80 miles north of the Cape of Nordmaar. From west to east, their names are Tayol, Winged Majesty, Berann, Heart, Jaentarth, Misty Isle, Mind, and Alarm. The stony mountains of these islands show a varied history: shafts and shards of pumice and obsidian indicate a volcanic past, but various outcrops of limestone and sandstone point to sedimentary origins and subsequent massive upheaval. Doubtless, the Cataclysm had a great effect on the current position and shape of these isles.

Although the islands average only ten miles in diameter, each contains every terrain from lush plains to high mountains. This wide variation of land types makes each isle a beautiful and idyllic world unto itself. But humans and demi-humans rarely see the beauty. These are magical isles. Legends say they shift in shape and position when human ships approach. Many a captain has reported pursuing one of the isles out to sea only to be closed upon by night. Whether these shifting islands are merely low-lying clouds, phantasmal visions, or actual spots of land, none can tell. Certainly none has asked the islands' natives: gold, bronze, and copper dragons, and hulderfolk, kyrie, irda, and shadowpeople.

**Climate:** Lying deep within the tropics, the Dragon Isles stay warm the year round. Typically during the long summer, the air is steamy, the sky is fiercely blue, and the waves on the white-sand shores are calm. However, about once a month, a storm boils up in the deep heavens, unleashing bouts of rain and furious waves at sea. Such storms can last for days, their incessant winds battering the coastline.

Though terrains vary markedly across the isles, every spot's vegetation shares one feature: density. The heat and dampness make the islands veritable shrines for plant-life. The mountain slopes are as verdant as the rainforests below. Some say, even, that the plants on the Dragon Isles act as husbandmen for the animal residents, keeping the populations down to manageable numbers.

**Politics:** No political affiliation binds these lands together. The settlements of Lief, Curriculum, Haedan, Watch, Perch, Vermis, and the City of Gold all belong to different factions—the last of which is the place of dragons. None of these peoples cares to engage in affairs beyond their borders; indeed, most of them fled at one time or another to escape Ansalonian prejudices and warfare. The most organized society—that of the dragons in the City of Gold—may debate the philosophical ramifications of warfare and political alliances, but none would act upon these.

**Trade:** The Dragon Isles have little need for trade with each other or the outside world. Each isle contains the foods and resources for a rich life. However, any of the islands' finished goods (for example, metal weaponry or glassware) come from Ansalon. Typically, these items are not bought or bartered, but attained from wrecked or derelict ships that beach upon the islands..



## NORDMAAR

**Culture:** North Keep, the feudal seat of the King of Nordmaar, is surrounded by relatively new land, as a good portion of Nordmaar emerged from the ocean following the Cataclysm. Perhaps because of this newness, or because of the difficult terrain, Nordmaar has one of the largest homogeneous populations on Krynn. Human barbarians occupy these moorlands. Their language is Nordmaarian, although many speak the tongues of their nearest neighbors, Kalinese and Estwilde. Ogre, Draconian, and Goblin are of course spoken by the occupying Red Dragonarmy. Common is not yet a mainstay tongue, though it is heard in particular enclaves, as are Mountain Barbarian and Dargo.

**Geography:** This huge wasteland is larger than Northern Ergoth. The Cape of Nordmaar is thick with foliage that remains verdant year round. Farther south, the land drops gently away into a broad and dangerous moor. Here, the jungle undergrowth of the plains becomes steeped in water that ranges from 1 to 25 feet deep. The moors boast many exotic fruits. Although the rest of the continent has not acquired a taste for these fruits, Nordmaarians routinely make liqueurs from them.

Between the two types of terrain stands North Keep, where the barbarian King of Nordmaar rules his lands.

South and west of the moors, a thin band of desert and savannah land separates Nordmaar from continental Ansalon. In these arid grasslands, the horse barbarians make their homes.

**Climate:** Because Nordmaar covers the north-most tip of Ansalon, it suffers a tropical climate. Bounded on three sides

by the Northern Courrain Ocean, Nordmaar's humidity matches its incredible heat. Summers are long in this area, and the ferns and trees do not drop their leaves. All types of peculiar plants grow here, the vegetation so thick travelers may never set foot on the dirt. Trees common farther south cannot survive the constant, sultry heat. The same is true of many animal species.

**Politics:** This barbarian kingdom currently suffers under the Red Dragonarmy. Unlike other nations that grudgingly endure their oppressors, the folk of Nordmaar actively hunt down the dragons in their lands. Their steadfast ally Solamnia sends scores of knights and adventurers to aid in the struggle. Some factions in Nordmaar press for unification with Solamnia. Others proclaim they must stand on their own. Both camps agree not to rest until their land is freed of the red dragons.

**Trade:** Nordmaar trades extensively with Solamnia, sending either ships from Jennison or caravans through the dangerous wastes of Estwilde. Nordmaar deals in all sorts of exotic compounds, spices, plants, and animals. The plains barbarians of western Nordmaar make chariots, carts, and carriages as their main exports. From southern Nordmaar come iron and marble. For all these products traded to Solamnia, they receive in return steel, gems, and food.

## Gildentongue



Gildentongue speaks in a relaxed, slightly sibilant voice. Although he seldom raises his tone, his words are easily audible, even in a noisy room. When interacting with potential enemies, Gildentongue uses his shapechanging abilities to move about in many disguises: a simple farmer, stupid ogre, golden-haired maiden, lanky urchin, and so forth.

Proud to be an aurak draconian, Gildentongue looks down on mammalian races and tends to treat them as inferiors. This prejudice often causes him to underestimate mammals at first. He also does not deign to use his jaws and teeth when fighting. He prefers to attack with energy blasts and his noxious breath unless forced into retreat.

Gildentongue is a special agent of the Dark Queen, sent by her to keep the peace between Lord Toede, the Blue Lady, and her other allies. Only the Blue Lady and Toede know his true nature and he obeys only their orders. He is completely loyal to Takhisis, but distrusts the Blue Lady. He attempts to frustrate her by aiding Toede whenever possible.

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## KERN

**Culture:** Ogres, centaurs, the Red Dragonarmy, humans, and goblins all find Kern a satisfactory homeland. The despotic ogre rulers in Kernen, the capital city, are happy to treat with the Red Dragonarmy. Ogre, Common, and Nordmaarian are the languages most frequently spoken, although a fair portion of the populace speaks Minotaur. The occasional immigrant or veteran knows Centaur, Kalinese, Nerakese, or possibly Mountain Barbarian.

**Geography:** The peninsula of Kern thrusts between Taman Busuk and the Blood Sea. In the north, Kern merges with eastern Estwilde, and in the south, it neighbors Khur and Balfor. The Ogrelands region of southern Kern sports flatlands with vast expanses of wild Savannah. A large northeastern

arm of the Khalkists reaches into central Kern, holding the capital city of Kern in its embrace. Northwest of the mountains, the land becomes an uneven waste. On the eastern edge of Kern, the grasses grow more green and dense, harboring treacherous sloughs and hidden bogs. This deep green "sea" stretches across the peninsula to a small forest, the Endscape Woods. Here, hardy pines thrive among vast and exotic ferns. The tidal march of Miremier provides a home for scrag, sea lions, and nixies.

**Climate:** The OGRELANDS and the western region of Kern are arid. Thick grasses leave room for only a few tenacious trees. In the south and west, this hot, dry area verges on the savage deserts of Khur. The grasses grow thinner and drier in these border regions. Throughout the Savannah, skies remain blue and cloudless the eight months from Bran through Phoenix, but in winter, thunderclouds boil up and downpours drench the land. The plants of the plain draw the rain into reservoir roots, where they store up for the long summer.

The peninsula experiences no steady cycle of rainfall and drought. One day brings torrential rain; the next has cloudless skies; and the next drizzles dismally. Clouds built up over the Northern Courrain Ocean funnel south over the Miremier Straits and then wander across the peninsula of Kern. But these clouds do not provide relief from the heat. In fact, the humidity intensifies the temperature, creating a verdant land filled with many species of biting bugs.

The farthest tip of the peninsula—the Endscape Forest—experiences the most constant heat and the fiercest downpours.

**Politics:** A decentralized and sporadically ruled nation of ogres, Kern is currently under occupation by the Red Dragonarmy. Unlike other captive nations, the ogres admire the aggressions of the red dragons. The Kern ogres willingly support any plot of their captors and, ergo, of the Dark Queen. According to some reports, the goddess Takhisis has even come in avatar form to the dying capital city of Kern. No civilized witness can testify to the accuracy of these rumors.

**Trade:** Kern trades mainly with Blode, to the south. Neither nation, however, has much to offer except merchandise stolen from caravans or nearby villages. Most such equipment comes with dents and scratches. The only home-produced items of exchange are talismans, hemp, rope, netting, dogs, and flax. Pirates find the long coast conveniently unpatrolled.

### Fritzen Dorgaard



questa.

Fritz feels that life is a grand adventure. He often leaps into combat wielding a dagger in each hand. He has a secret fear of fire and avoids even small flames whenever possible.

Fritz was scheduled to hang for piracy when Maquesta Kar-Thon rescued him. He has been with her ever since. He sails with her on the *Perechon* and acts as her personal bodyguard.

Fritz is flamboyant and boisterous, as is common among half-ogres. He enjoys taunting his enemies and dislikes most minotaurs. Fritz has a bestial handsomeness that attracts many women. And he knows it. He is a rogue and scoundrel but his loyalty lies with his captain, Ma-

### Maquesta Kar-Thon



When Maquesta's sailor father died, he left her only the *Perechon* and a pile of debts. On his deathbed, he forced Maquesta to swear she would sacrifice everything for wealth. Money alone seemed to matter in the cruel and evil world. Embittered by her father's passing, Maquesta has obeyed him to this day, trusting only her first-mate and her bodyguard.

Maquesta met Bas-Ohn Koraf on the Isle of Mithas where they both stayed in a Minotaur prison, awaiting execution. He saved her life and helped her escape. Although she feels a fondness for the minotaur, she will not admit this even to herself. She still has nightmares about the prison. The captain picked up Fritz when she rescued him from a draconian gal- lows.

Maquesta speaks in a clear, husky voice. She is accustomed to leading men and therefore uses a commanding tone whenever she speaks. She chooses handsome and somewhat slow-witted men to flirt with, but avoids any commitments. Her first loyalty is to ship and crew and her second is to paying customers and those to whom she owes a debt of honor. She is a tough bargainer, but an honest merchant.

Maquesta appears to come from the northern race of black-skinned mariners, but is really half elf and half sea barbarian. She has bobbed her ears to conceal her elven ancestry because elves are hunted in lands of the dragon. Only her first-mate and bodyguard know of her true lineage.

As merchant and pirate, Maquesta plays both sides of the fence. Her quiet rebellion against dragonarmy rule is a dangerous occupation, but she carefully avoids capture. She detests draconians, having sworn a secret blood-oath against those who massacre the elven people. She battles ruthlessly against draconian ships, making sure that none of the lizard folk escapes to reveal her duplicity.

### Bas-Ohn Koraf "Kof"



Koraf was apprenticed to a ship-builder in Lacynos and studied under him for many years. Another apprentice, Diro, jealously sabotaged Koraf's final test—a solo sail with the master builder. Koraf made his way to shore from the sinking ship, but the master builder was struck by a piece of the rigging, and drowned. That night, Koraf overheard Diro bragging. In a fit of rage, Koraf strangled Diro with his bare hands. Because minotaur law forbids killing another minotaur except in the arena, Koraf was thrown into prison to await execution.

There he met Maquesta, also sentenced to die. They escaped, and have been together since.

Koraf speaks slowly, if at all. His voice is deep and rumbling. He is more refined and gentle than most of his race, but becomes a true beast in battle. Though hot-tempered, Koraf usually manages to maintain control, especially in matters of business. When he does lose it, someone usually goes overboard. Condemned by his own people, he has grown more kindly toward humans than most minotaurs are. Kof would never betray his crewmates. He respects any one who bests him in fair combat, but he distrusts strangers and fears magic.



## Khur and Balifor

**Culture:** Khuri-Khan is the nominal capital of this arid khanate, where desert nomads and other rugged humans battle the elements for survival. The second significant population is the Green Dragonarmy, retreated to these western deserts from Silvanesti. The languages of Khur, Ogre, Zakhar, and Common are recognized across the country, while Nerakese, Draconian, and Goblin are concentrated among the army's ranks. Rarely, a denizen might speak Silvanesti, Centaur, and among older natives, Kenderspeak.

**Geography:** On three sides of the Khurman Sea hulk the dry and rugged land of Khur. In the north, rocky badlands give way to mountains of craggy stone. In the cool recesses beneath the rocky cliffs, sinewy plants struggle to survive. Farther up slope, the climate becomes cooler, allowing savannah grasses to blanket the stone. The roots of these grasses harbor what scant rain falls.

Adventurers unaccustomed to the altitude tend to grow weary and breathless in these grassy highlands. Some even report having visions while atop the wild mountains.

The southern and eastern edges of Khur contain vast, sandy wastes. Oases are few and far between, built about deep wells or beside small, natural pools. Invariably, these water sources are fiercely guarded by nomadic tribes, who establish tent encampments about them. Between oases lie endless wastes of sand and scrubby brush. Occasionally, a wanderer will happen upon the ruins of an ancient Savannah city from old Istar. But otherwise, the desert contains no permanent settlements.

Farther south lies the land of Balifor. Once a forest homeland for kender, now Balifor is the same harsh and sandy

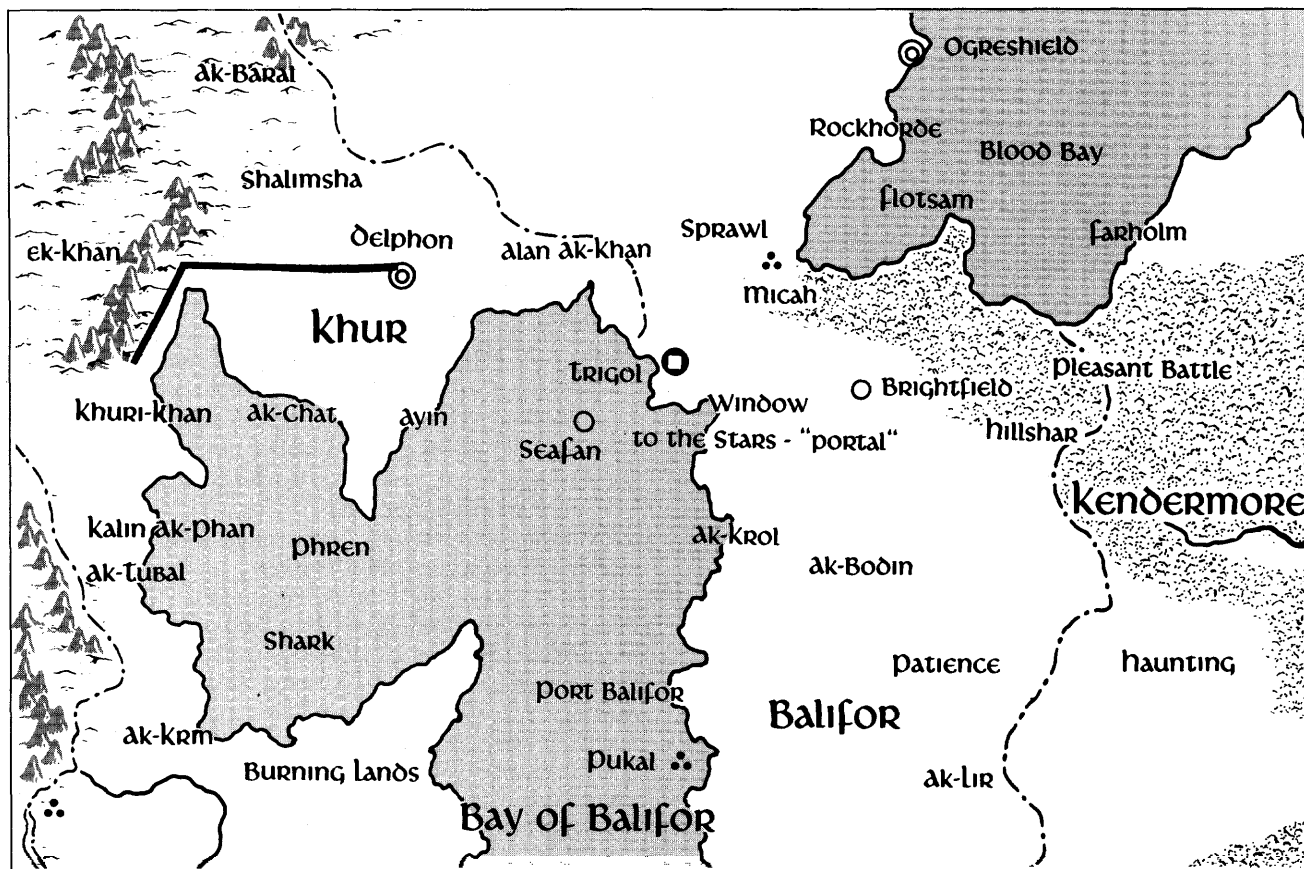
waste as Khur to the north. The desert holds only one city of note: Port Balifor. Known for its bawdy taverns, black markets, and expansive slums, Port Balifor attracts chiefly draconians and rough-necks. The town itself extends out into the Bay of Balifor, built upon wharves over the tidal plain. Beneath these wharves, the criminal element of Balifor does its business.

**Climate:** Khur is among the driest places upon Krynn. For seven months, from Chismont to Hiddumont, the days are blisteringly hot and the nights are cold enough to see one's breath. During these long summer months, the sky remains deeply blue. Any clouds burn away just before sunrise and gather again only at sunset. The night sky looks like a bowl of polished obsidian sprinkled with sandlike stars. In summer months, the only storms to cross the land are sandstorms, which can be more deadly than hail.

The rest of the year, clouds grow more common, tempering the heat of day and the chill of night. On rare occasions, rain falls. Most of the water sinks quickly into the insatiable sand or the tenacious grasses of the mountains. Occasionally a cloudburst over a mountain sends water surging down eroding washes, causing flash floods in the valleys below.

**Politics:** This rugged land is home to a rugged people: the desert nomads. These militant folk respect the power and beauty of the trackless desert; they have grown to love their homeland. As well as fighting for survival in the arid plains, the nomads must endure the Green Dragonarmy, which laid claim to the western deserts when driven out of Silvanesti.

A number of the clans have sent envoys to Neraka in the north, asking for the liberation of the western deserts. Some of the nomadic rulers even work to consolidate their separate folk into one nation. The unique customs and fierce pride of



the nomads present obstacles to union, both with each other and with the city of Neraka. The Solamnians feel uneasy about the nascent empire to their east, especially given the nomads' insatiable appetite for weaponry.

**Trade:** The warlike nomads of Khur raise excellent horses—fleet-footed and strong. They trade these fine beasts along with harnesses, diamonds, glass, and petrol in exchange for weapons and armor. They also deal in exotic spices such as myrrh and frankincense, as well as items found in ruined cities of old Istar.

## **Blode and Blodeheim**

**Culture:** Bloten, the capital of Blode, has been an ogre settlement since ancient times. Although the main population is ogre, the remnants of the Green Dragonarmy add some ethnic diversity. Ogre is the nation's major language, followed by the occupiers' Draconian. Common is infrequently spoken, and the rare Zakhar, Bakali, Slig and Centaur speak their own tongues.

**Geography:** Squeezed between the southern arms of the Khalkist Mountains, Blode has proven a stronghold for its ogre inhabitants. On three sides of the verdant valley stand forbidding mountains and a broad desert. On the country's fourth side lies the Thon-Thalas River, which protects the valley from invasions from the south. Despite the obvious security and fertility of the valley, it holds only two major settlements, the capital city Bloten and the ruins of Takar.

Bloten huddles against a southern arm of the Khalkist mountain range. The ancient walls of the city, crumbling though they are, attest to a lost greatness among the ogre folk. The hunched and wart-riddled ogres that shamble through the mighty stonework structures are but twisted shadows of the high ogres who founded the city.

The ruins of Takar are just that: ruins of a bygone age of glory. Because of their depth within ogre borders and the current occupation of the lands by the Green Dragonarmy, few civilized adventurers have explored this spot.

**Climate:** The high mountains to the west of Blode sift moisture from the balmy winds of the New Sea, drying the air. Although not a desert, the plains of Blode are more arid than those west of the mountains and than the forest of Silvanesti to the south. Despite a mild climate, the flora and fauna of Blode tends to be scrubby, scabrous, and stunted, much like the ogre folk themselves.

**Politics:** The ogre chieftain maintains a tentative alliance with the ogre nation of Kern to the north. As a result of the War of the Lance, however, Blode is occupied by the Green Dragonarmy while Kern is occupied by the Red Dragonarmy. The antagonisms between green and red dragons may force the High Chief to cancel his alliance with Kern. Anticipating this division, the chieftain is strengthening Blode's ties to the nomads of Khur and the pirates of Sanction.

**Trade:** The ogres of Blode trade only with those whom they cannot pummel into submission—the pirates of Sanction and the fierce nomads of Khur. Deals typically begin with the ogre and the pirate (or nomad) on opposite sides of the table. In front of each stands a dagger, its tip imbedded in the tabletop. The item to be bargained for rests on the table directly in front of the seller; the buyer's coin bag lies in sight of the seller and in reach of the purchaser. Typically, ogres barter with pork, shale, clay, coal, and lizards. The buyer tosses coins into the center, and with each coin, the seller pushes the desired ob-

ject closer to the buyer. When the seller becomes satisfied with the payment, he scoops up his money and tosses the object over. If one party double-crosses the other or quits the negotiations too soon, the knives come out of the table and a fight to the death ensues.

This brutal trading practice is still a far cry better than that reserved for other folk. The ogres routinely raid caravans that circle south of the Khalkists or venture north toward Zhakar. Merchants of such caravans constantly seek brave (foolhardy) adventurers for escort duty.

## **Silvanesti**

**Culture:** Once the capital of high elf culture, Silvanost recently has been overrun by the creatures of nightmare, and its original population is dispossessed. Those who return to clean up the bleeding woods speak Silvanesti and Qualinesti almost universally, and frequently Common, Ergot, Kharian, and/or Khur. The creatures include scattered populations of Ogre, and Goblin. The occasional curiosity-seeking kender or industrious mountain dwarves converse in their own tongues. Many Silvanesti refugees, and much of their senatorial government, have retreated to Southern Ergoth. The Speaker of the Stars and his daughter, Alhana Starbreeze, may still be found here.

**Geography:** The fabled Silvanesti Woods, homeland of the elves for millennia, was once a forest of unutterable beauty. The trees were tall and slender, their high boughs forming a translucent canopy above. The clear and glittering Than-Thalas (Lord's) River ran through the forest, diverging just north of Silvanost and converging just south of it. The elven citadel of Silvanost contained sparkling buildings of marble and living wood. The folk had not built the city, but patiently reshaped nature into forms both beautiful and practical. The glory of the city was the Tower of the Stars, where the king presided in glowing moonlight.

In 2645 PC, the elves defended their bejeweled land against an attack by evil dragons. But the dragon attack of 349 AC came too swiftly to be warded off. As the elven folk fled onto ocean-going ships, King Lorac of Silvanesti wielded a magical dragon orb to destroy the dragons. It summoned them instead, and took control of the king. His nightmares in the following months reshaped the forest into its current hideous form.

Now called the Bleeding Wood, the forest of Silvanesti is filled with cracked, rotting trees whose trunks are evilly twisted and whose gnarled roots clutter the ground. The once-beautiful Than-Thalas River runs thick with ooze. The Tower of the Stars totters, a withered and tumorous spire. Grieved by the loss of their homeland, the elves established a thick hedge around Silvanesti to ward off any wandering good creature.

**Climate:** The climate of Silvanesti matches its ruined state. Winters last nearly six months from H'ramont to Chislmont, with blizzards and bitter winds. Those caught without shelter quickly perish. Springs are stormy, as warm currents off the Eastern Courrain Ocean fling storm clouds over the forest. The Than-Thalas often floods, its waters sweeping away any who try to pass. When summer sets in during Corij, the forest grows hot and the smell of decay becomes overwhelming. By Reorxmont, autumn arrives, and the healthy trees turn as dry and brown as the unhealthy ones.

**Politics:** The Silvanesti elves are dispossessed. Many dwell in scattered groups on the plains about their forest homeland. Their main desire is to reclaim Silvanesti, driving out the foul beasts that have laid claim to their land. Much care must follow to heal the bleeding wood.

Needless to say, the only diplomatic actions that interest the elves are those that involve reclamation of their home. They have struck an alliance with Solamnia for this very purpose. Although the Silvanesti are not sending out appeals for help, they do grudgingly accept aid from adventurers such as rangers, herbalists, or priests of Chislev.

**Trade:** This battered elven nation has great needs now, but scant resources to trade with those around. The elves sojourning upon the border lands offer ivory, wood, wine, woodcarving, needlecraft, metalcraft, and herbal medicines. They are chiefly interested in bartering for resources that can directly assist the elves in recovering their homeland: weaponry, armor, mercenaries, and dragonlances.

#### Lorac Caladon



At this time, Lorac, Speaker of the Stars and King of Silvanesti, is a shattered wreck of a man. However, in happier times, he was considered one of the most handsome elves in the kingdom. He was a great leader: intelligent, robust, and well educated.

When the dragonarmies besieged Lorac's fair forest of Silvanesti? he sought to destroy them. Pulling out a mystical dragon orb that he had discovered some time before, Lorac summoned its power to destroy the dragons. Sadly, the dragon orb's power proved greater than Lorac's. The evil mind trapped within the orb-Viper, the Green Dragon Spirit-cast

a spell on Lorac, imprisoning him in his own nightmares. The spell also distorted the fair forest of Silvanesti.

#### Alhana Starbreeze



Alhana's voice is coldly polite when dealing with those of other races—other than Silvanesti elves, that is. The daughter of the Speaker of the Stars harbors a thinly-veiled hostility for those she was raised to believe were less blessed peoples. She originally held all outsiders responsible for her nation's downfall—a prejudice she still finds hard to entirely abandon. She was born to the throne of Silvanesti and it shows in every one of her words and gestures. Oddly enough, her cold facade hides a warm, loving, young woman. She is easily moved to sympathy, although she hides her feelings very well.

When Alhana wants something, she does not cajole or plead: she demands. She acts the same way in battle. Despite her small stature, she fights like a berserker, refusing to hold back and relinquishing no quarter. She has often overwhelmed opponents many times her size.

During the Dragon Wars, Alhana was attending a diplomatic meeting in Sancrist when the news arrived that her homeland had fallen to the dragonarmies. Because her people had been holding off the draconians quite well when she left, this news came as a complete shock. She immediately left for her homelands to find her father, who had not fled with his people. She discovered the paths to Silvanost had become strange and twisted. Luckily, she met the Heroes of the Lance on her way. She persuaded them to accompany her and soon regretted it, for she found herself doing the unthinkable: falling in love with the human Sturm Brightblade.

Alhana is deeply attached to her homeland, and has not joined the exiles in Southern Ergoth. She is most likely to be in Silvanost, the twisted capital city of Silvanesti.

#### Waylorn Wyvernsbane

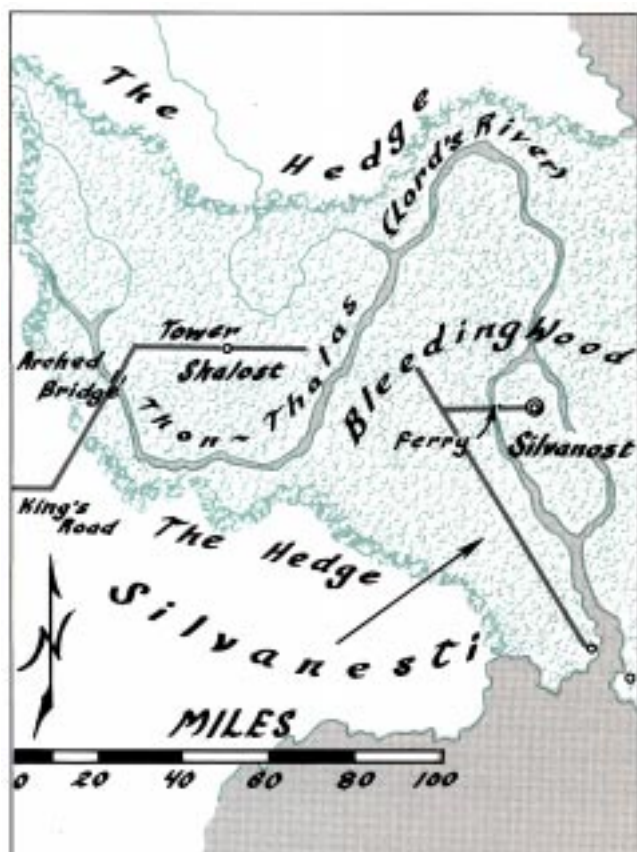


The druid Waylorn occasionally believes himself to be Huma, hero of the Third Dragon War. This personality quirk is perhaps understandable, as Waylorn was a contemporary of Huma's. Waylorn fell asleep in those ancient days and did not awaken until long after Ansalon had been reshaped by the Cataclysm.

Waylorn has a quiet, soothing, tired voice of moderate tones. However, when he believes himself to be Huma, his voice becomes deeper and more heroic. He is clean-shaven but occasionally strokes his upper lip as if smoothing a moustache.

In his role as a druid, Waylorn is wise and brave and has a good head for tactics. Sometimes, however, he attacks trees or rocks, claiming they are dragons in disguise. During these periods (which may last for hours), Waylorn claims to be Huma. Probably he merely knew Huma and his long sleep has left him somewhat confused as to his own identity. He has considerable druidic powers, and does not hesitate to use them in battle, whether with real or imagined opponents.

Waylorn was discovered locked in magical sleep. He lay in the base of a tower that appeared to have been built during the Age of Might, over 1,500 years ago. He has no memories of the time between then and now, nor does he understand



the historical events since that time. Waylorn originally loved and later became the foe of an elven sorceress named Silvyana. The dark mage summoned many wyrms to her side to savage the aristocracy of Silvanesti. Waylorn and the elves, however, slew her army and she retreated to the sanctity of her enchanted tower. She then stepped into the River of Time, fleeing into a future when her foes would be weaker.

Waylorn tragically sought to pursue his fallen love through time. He entered the Sleep of the Ages, from which the Heroes of the Lance awoke him prematurely. He believes the devastations the world suffers are due to Silvyana. His grief seems to have left him reason.

### Blood Sea Isles

**Culture:** Each of these islands has its own distinct flavor. Sea Reach is the capital of Saifhum, where sea barbarians find safe haven. Lacynos serves as the central settlement for Mithas' minotaurs, pirates, and kyrie. Kalpethis rules a similar mixed population on the island of Kothas. So far, no adventurers have returned to tell tales of Karthay. Because of the varied backgrounds of its mariners, Common is the lingua franca in the republic of Saifum, although nearly a dozen other languages, from native Saifum to exotic Ergot and Dargoi are heard from time to time. The Minotaur Isles are more homogenized, though Kothas follows a feudal system, and Mithas looks to an emperor. Minotaur is the language of choice on both islands; a minority speak Kyrie.

**Geography:** When the fiery mountain struck the city of Istar in the Cataclysm, it dragged the whole nation to the ocean floor. Only the coastal mountains along the Northern Courrain remained above the sea, becoming islands. These areas survived due to their altitude, though legends say their innocence of the guilt of Istar spared them. The Blood Sea Isles were and are lands of minotaurs and beasts.

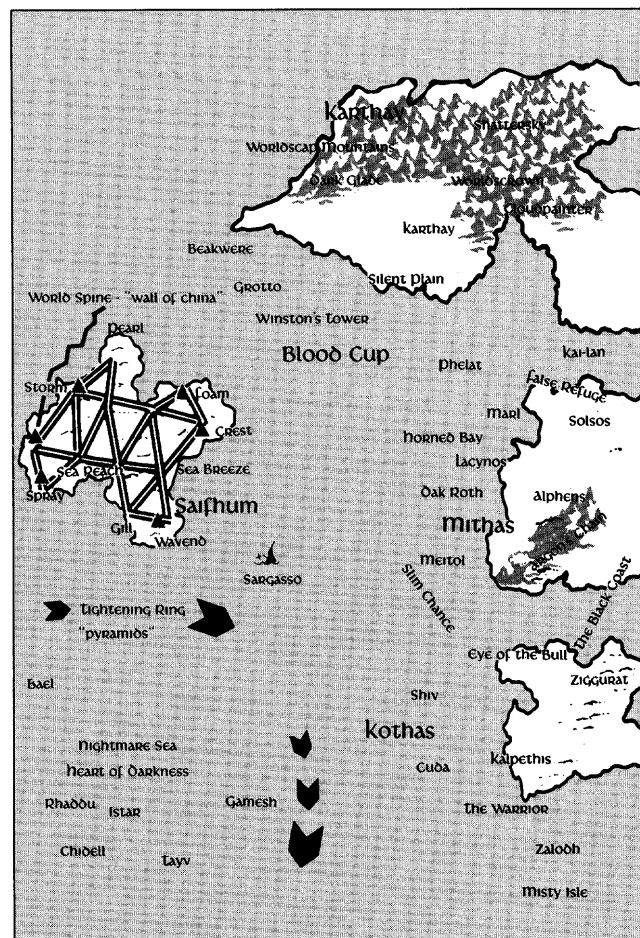
**Saifhum** is a harsh land. Its rocky hills hold only stunted vegetation and a few native creatures. A mariner's settlement, Sea Reach, is the most prominent site on Saifhum.

**Karthay**, the largest and northernmost of the isles, contains barren, hot plains and high, rain-forested mountains. No known adventurer has yet explored and detailed the Worldcap mountains of Karthay, whose exotic forests are said to be impenetrable. Most prominent among the ruins on Karthay are those of the lighthouse (Winston's Tower) that guided ships safely into and out of the treacherous waters of the Blood Sea.

Just south of Karthay lies **Mithas**, a fiery island whose scrub plains lie in the shadow of four great volcanoes. The minotaurs rule this isle from the port capital of Lacynos (Nethosak in Minotaur), which lies shielded from the Blood Sea by Horned Bay.

**Kothas** also serves as a home to minotaurs, who rule the isle in combination with piratical men. Although Kothas is not plagued by volcanoes as is its northern neighbor, neither is it blessed with Mithas's vegetation. Most of this island's scant population dwells in the capital city of Kalpethis and along the coast.

**Climate:** All of these isles rest deeply in a band of tropical weather. None experiences winter. Summer lasts for ten months of the year, bringing broiling temperatures, oppressive humidity, and frequent rain. These conditions encourage vegetable life to thrive, despite the poor and rocky soil of the three smaller isles. On Karthay, the mountain forest becomes



very thick and many unusual plants thrive.

**Politics:** The minotaur (and pirate) islands of Kothas and Mithas seek stronger ties with the Black Dragonarmies on the Dairly Peninsula. If diplomatic efforts succeed, the minotaurs will have a choke-hold on the treacherous eastern passage around the Blood Sea of Istar and all seas south. Their aggressive privateering has made the minotaurs a nuisance from Nordmaar to Balifor.

The sea barbarians of Saifhum actively resist this expansion. They fish the waters north and east of Saifhum and run trade routes around the inner curve of the Maelstrom. As the minotaurs grow in solidarity, the mariners increasingly sabotage their far-roaming ships, planting artificial reefs and anchor traps. A Saifhum ship is known to have sailed for Sanctrist to purchase gnomish channel mines. None knows if they are planted.

**Trade:** The chief trades of Saifhum are fishing, kelp harvesting, salt production, and shipping. The mariners of Sea Reach sell their exotic tropical fish, kelp, and salt as far away as Palanthus and Port Balifor. Once they empty their holds in these distant ports, they load up with other goods to resell.

The minotaur nations of Mithas and Kothas specialize in ships, bronze tools and weapons, salvage operations, and mercenary sailors. The minotaurs log the verdant forests of Elian for ship planking. They make runs to Flotsam for general trade supplies, but buy nothing in large quantities. Their staple foods are Blood Sea fish and grain garnered from Saifhum ships they raid. These isles conduct their heaviest trade with each other.



## Chot Es-Kalin



Minotaur chieftain Chot Es-Kalin speaks in a loud, angry manner when he deigns to speak at all. He cannot understand Common, and seldom addresses lessers unless deciding their fate. Chot is a violent, cruel creature who leads by terror and intimidation.

Chot looks down on all other races as inferiors. He does, however, have a strong respect for dragons and those who control them. He refuses to believe a member of an inferior race could defeat him, and consequently toys with opponents, dragging out combat like a cat with a mouse.

Chot made his way to power over the bodies of his opponents. This is his style of governing, also. He has made a pact with the Dragon Highlords to further his own ambitions, but he does not trust his leaders. So, he has entered into a secret pact with the Reaver, chief of the human pirate fleets. He and the Reaver seem to be cut from the same cloth. Their alliance may not take them far, but they certainly deserve each other.

Living in Lacynos, Chot seldom leaves his capital city. Most opponents meet him in the arena.

## Goodlund Peninsula

**Culture:** While the Goodlund peninsula is a large, crab claw-shaped area, the kender of Goodlund compose the only noteworthy civilization on the outward peninsula. Some might argue that the term *kender civilization* is oxymoronic, but of late, the leaders of Goodlund have some very serious problems of civilization to consider. Other inhabitants of their region include the remnants of the Black Dragonarmy, goblins, and a good number of slig. Curious kender find that Kenderspeak and Common are not the only interesting and handy languages to know, and a good many have picked up Silvanesti, Goblin, and even Draconian. Slig and Ogres speak their own tongues. Occasionally Khur, Gully Talk, and even Centaur crop up on this wild end of Ansalon. While the kender favor a democratic monarchy, the thugs of the Black Dragonarmy labor under the totalitarian rule of their dragonlord.

**Geography:** Although considered a forest nation by most, Goodlund contains as much plainsland as it does forest. In the southwest corner of Goodlund lies the Verdant Plain, where stubborn grasses stem the advancing tide of the Balifor Desert. East of this flat, the forest of Goodlund spreads. This woodland brims with fruit trees, furtive creatures, and odd insects-enough flora and fauna to earn the interest of kender who dwell there.

Still farther east, a wide plain opens. Although dubbed "the Laughing Land" this barren and desolate Savannah holds little to laugh about. Rocky coastlines and hidden shoals run along the jagged edge of this peninsula. Many of these rocks are sharp and translucent: during the Cataclysm, the sands of Istar were melted into glass by the heat of the mountain's impact.

**Climate:** The Blood Sea of Istar plays havoc with the climate of the Goodlund peninsula. Though on a level with Southern Ergoth, Goodlund's summer lasts for nine or ten months of the year, and winter is only a dulling of the ever-present heat. The strong currents of the Blood Sea drag the tropical climate over 300 miles farther south than it would otherwise affect.

**Politics:** A deadly threat spreads east of Goodlund Forest.

The Black Dragonarmy is growing. With governmental encouragement, Goodlund kender lure adventurers to their lands to escort them on dragon-hunting expeditions.

Aside from this life-or-death concern, the Goodlund kender seek better trade with Port Balifor-mostly because of the curious and wonderful baubles available through that sea port.

**Trade:** Those who believe kender cannot compose accurate maps have not seen a map from Goodlund. Many aged kender, retiring after years of wanderlust, have set to mapping all the lands they have seen. The first maps thus produced are, of course, flawed, but the kender penchant for showing off their work and fiddling to add more curious details slowly refines the maps. A map that has knocked about Goodlund for five years will be shockingly accurate, and fetches a healthy sum.

The kender also trade in coral, wood, fish, and dried fruits for shiny objects and interesting gadgets.

## Dragonarmy Occupied Territories

**Geography:** The five dragonarmies of Takhisis emerged from the War of the Lance in possession of various regions, as noted in the nation's descriptions above. For an overview of the entire situation, the details are recapped here.

The Red Dragonarmy holds the southern half of Nordmaar and the northern half of Kern. The Black Dragonarmy territories extend from the eastern border of Goodlund to the Courrain Ocean. The Green Dragonarmy dominates the lands north of Silvanesti, south of Taman Busuk and between Blode and the Bay of Balifor. The Blue Dragonarmy holds the region from Sanction to Central Lemish, south of Throt. The White Dragonarmy holds an area 130 miles in diameter in the central region of Icereach.

**Politics:** Each of the dragonarmies is ruled by dragons of the appropriate color. They take their orders directly from their Dragon Highlord or from Takhisis's avatar. The lower ranks of the dragonarmies consist of draconians, hobgoblins, goblins, ogres, trolls, giants, minotaurs, thanoi (in the White Dragonarmy), and evil humans and demihumans.

Although they all fight for the same Dark Queen, each dragonarmy is self-promoting and rife with animosity. Squabbles amongst themselves keep the dragons at bay at least as well as human and demihuman defenses do. Some dragonarmies have established alliances with each other: the Red and Black Dragonarmies work together, as do the Blue and Green Dragonarmies. The Black Dragonarmy is also allied with the minotaurs. The White Dragonarmy has no allies.

The dragonarmies, of course, want to dominate all of Krynn, but they are currently too disadvantaged to hold any more land than they now occupy. In addition, most of the dragonarmies occupy climates and terrains that are alien to them. The dragons have grown weak in these unaccustomed climes. Still, they have nowhere else to live. Each dragonarmy therefore strives to hold onto its lands, keeping the forces of good at bay.

**Trade:** Trade caravans that attempt to move through dragonarmy-occupied territories typically end up sacked and destroyed. Businesses operating within dragonarmy-occupied territory must pay exorbitant tax rates that reach 60% in some places. Even so, the locals struggle desperately to continue their lives and livelihoods, channeling a large volume of goods through the black market.







# The People of ansalon

Although humans dominate Ansalon, many other races share the world of Krynn. Each race has its loves and hates, glories and shortcomings. One shortcoming of the human race has always been prejudice, which lumps every nonhuman of Krynn into stereotyped roles. This prejudice hurts humans as much as it does demihumans, for those who hold such views miss the real beauty of Krynn: individuality and diversity.

For instance, some untraveled humans assume that all kender wear a top-knot just because Tasslehoff Burrfoot does. Hogwash! In fact, Tasslehoff's real name, Kalin, was changed when folk in Northern Ergoth noticed his distinctive top-knot. They called him "Fringehead" (that is, "Tasslehoff") because few of the kender they had seen before wore top-knots.

Acknowledging this human penchant for stereotyping, the following demography of Krynn examines the diversities as well as the commonalities within a specific race. Each entry describes the physical appearance and lifespan of the race. Attitude toward the world and cultural values follow. A brief history of the race covers the major turning points in their development. Finally, unique tools and weapons developed by each race show their innovative solutions to common problems.

## Commoners

As noted previously, the majority of the world is human. It seems redundant to describe the human race—almost certainly, you're a member of it! But it is precisely because humans get short shrift that we include this thumbnail sketch.

Like everyday people you know, commoners have a variety of skin tones, hair-and eye-colors. Their height tends to be in the five to six foot range, and women are often a few inches shorter than men. Commoners on Krynn can live 60 years or more—a lifespan shorter than many other races. They pack a lot of energy and passion into those years.

Commoners are the worldbuilders and maintainers, the matrix of civilization that overlies the continent. Through their mundane labors; they create the world—each horse-shoe, hay bale, beer barrel, shirt and coat and cap. These folk are inkeepers, servants, blacksmiths, farmers and fishermen. Many work with their hands; most are awed by and distrustful of magic. They live in settlements from tiny hamlets to the huge city of Palanthus. They are everyday people.

In times of trouble, everyday people have been known to beat their plowshares into swords and march out to become heroes. But after the day has been won, many such folk find their most fervent wish is to return to their fields and their inns, and get on with the business of life. They go back to plowing and baking and weaving and building. They become the matrix once more, and leave the adventuring to those more suited—or more driven—to it.

Not even humans can be so neatly painted in one, unvarying stroke. Not all humans are commoners.

Some people choose not to settle in one place. Driven by wars, religious quests, or simply the need for new surroundings, these folk have developed alternatives to the rooted lifestyles of commoners.

## Barbarians ("Wanderers")

Several clans of human barbarians wander the face of Krynn. Each clan has adapted to its "native" environs over hun-

dreds, even thousands of years. Some brave rugged mountain peaks, others hunt Abanasinia's verdant plain, still others dwell upon blistering deserts, frigid polar wastes, or the tumbling and trackless sea.

### appearance

**Mountain, plains, and desert barbarians** have dark hair, umber eyes, and deeply golden skin. Their southern cousins, **ice barbarians**, have red or light brown hair, blue eyes, and pallid skin. Constant exposure to the elements weathers the features of all barbarians. By the ripe old age of 60, most barbarians have leathery skin, but young barbarians of both genders are among the most beautiful folk of Ansalon. On the average, barbarians stand an inch or so taller than the stunted city folk of the continent.

These three barbarian clans prefer to dress in furs, leathers, and skins. Since few barbarians perform agriculture, woven fabrics are rare luxuries.

**Sea barbarians** have richer skin tones than other barbarians, ranging from light brown to glowing black. They wear their tightly curled black hair closely cropped to their heads. Their eyes flash with emotion—joy one moment and wrath the next—much like the volatile sea. Sea barbarians enjoy flamboyant and gaudy garb of sailcloth, homespun, or bur-lap. Life among the roaring billows and pitching waves makes these folk boisterous and courageous. Even so, they are the most civilized of the barbaric races.

### attitudes and lifestyles

**Mountain, plains, and ice barbarians** are proud, grim traditionalists. They deeply respect nature, granting every creature, plant,



object, and place its due. These barbarians cast a suspicious eye toward "civilized" humans and their usurious lifestyles. Barbarians rarely place trust in such folk: until a city-dweller proves himself noble and honorable, he is considered lower than an animal. This distrust of civilized humans creates a similar distrust of mages and magic. Because wizards corrupt nature and turn it to their own ends, barbarians categorize mages among the most profane creatures in the world.

The land-based barbarians of Krynn live nomadically. They find life in cities and towns stifling and harsh compared to that in the wilds. They roam their home terrain, following the migrations of beasts and the change of seasons. Barbarians love nature. They respect the powers of the earth, and revere those who wield such powers.

**Sea barbarians** differ greatly from their brother wanderers. On the outside, these loud, friendly people brim with good cheer. Underneath, though, sea barbarians harbor a haughty pride that keeps them distant from other races. Even so, sea barbarians deal fairly with those they meet and, given time, develop friendships that can weather any storm.

Although they spend most of their time on the water, sea barbarians do dock occasionally. Their origins as city dwellers making them more tolerant of the press of civilization, these people maintain port cities where they can rest and sell their cargos. The city of Sea Reach on the island of Saifhum is one such bedroom town for sea barbarians. They forbid foreign traffic into Sea Reach, wishing to keep the foul folk of Ansaion at arm's reach.

## History

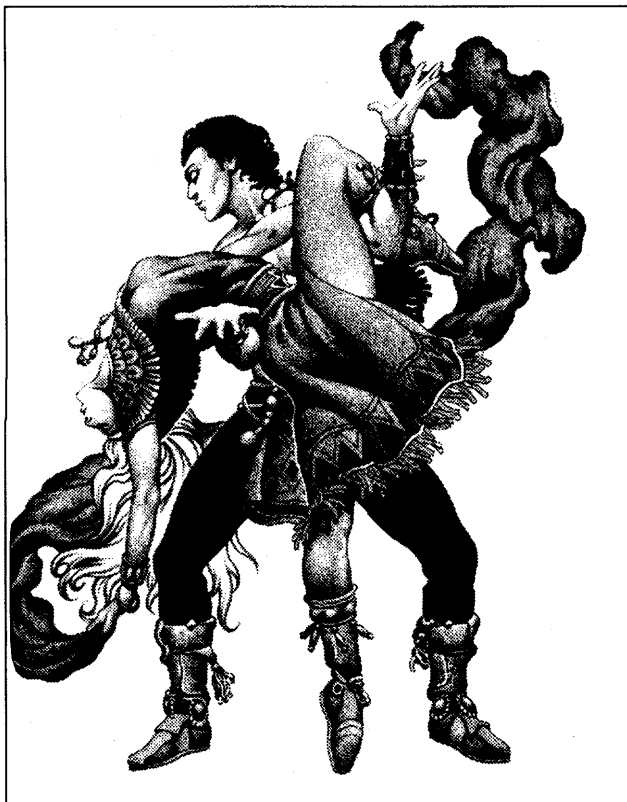
Humans, the final creation of the gods, were left with little homeland. Elves had claimed the forests and ogres had taken the mountains. Only the vast plains of Ansalon remained. The humans wandered out upon the plains, establishing a nomadic existence of hunting and gathering. They lived thus for years before ogres descended from the mountains and rounded up humans to serve as slaves.

For generations, humans labored in ogrish mines. They paid in sweat and blood for ogre luxuries, always too weary and divided to rebel. One ogre, Igraine, granted his slaves limited freedoms after they risked their lives to save his daughter. The hope of freedom spread like a plague through the mountains. Riots began. Ogres, angry at Igraine, pursued him from the city. Igraine's slaves fought fiercely for their liberator, holding off the ogre army. After a bloody and horrific battle, the humans and Igraine escaped.

The humans scattered to the corners of the world and learned to extract a living from the land. Some built cities in the fashion of the ogre cities they fled. The descendants of these people are today known as commoners. Others believed that cities were the root of slavery, bondage, and depravity. Such folk chose to wander, snubbing the corruption of civilization. Their descendants, the barbarian clans, wander to this day.

Some wanderers returned to the mountains, others felt the pull of the tundra lands far south. Still more fled into the desert, certain that the ogres would somehow seek revenge. The last group desired only to return to their ancestral homeland on the plains. Thus, human barbarian tribes live in most every terrain upon Ansalon.

The sea barbarians have an entirely different history. Their ancestors arose as mariners of once-mighty Istar. The Cataclysm



destroyed the heart-city of their shipping business and dispersed the mariners throughout the world. Since the zero hour, mariners have led a somewhat nomadic existence. They rarely settle permanently; the urge to travel fills their blood.

## Tools, Technology, and Weapons

Barbarian weapons are made of plentiful materials and double as common tools. For example, plains barbarians use bows and bolas both for hunting and as weaponry. Likewise, the bear claws of mountain barbarians help in scaling cliffs as well as in war. In addition to these unique weapons, barbarians commonly use spears, long and short swords, daggers, and clubs.

To outsiders, barbarian weapons range from quaint to clumsy to downright incomprehensible. Where to grip a barbarian weapon and how to use it to best advantage are lessons handed down only within the tribes. Barbarian fighters commonly wear fur and leather or studded-leather armor. They carry medium-sized wooden shields.

Some ingenious barbarian devices include ice flasks, hollowed bones which contain salt water, ash, and oil and are kept warm beneath one's furs. The flask breaks on impact, soaking the victim, who freezes until donning warm clothes. Additionally, the oil may be ignited with fire to inflict further damage.

Frostreavers are heavy battle axes of very dense ice. Only Revered Clerics of the Ice Folk can craft them. A frostreaver takes one month to create, using thanoi oil and files to thin and harden the ice. In a land where metal is scarce and temperatures are frigid, frostreavers are an inspired adaptation.

The fang is a modification of the gaffhook, a tool used for hauling fish into a boat. A fang is an iron rod with a spike on one end and a hooked blade below. The heavy rod can land a bashing blow and the spike or hook can pierce armor easily. This sea barbarian invention may also be used to trip foes or as an aid in climbing rigging.



## Dwarves

### ("Workers Under The Mountain")

#### appearance

Ansalonian dwarves are short and wide-shouldered, standing only four feet tall and weighing about 140 lbs. Males have full beards, and females and youths have wispy whiskers that do not form full beards. On the whole, dwarves have tough, wrinkled skin, and most males begin going bald while still quite young—often around 50 years old. The natural lifetime ranges from 250 to 450 years for all dwarves except gully dwarves (see below).

These statistics offer the broadest norms of the species. After five millennia upon Ansalon, the stout dwarven stock has splintered into various distinct races.

**Hill dwarves**, comprising the **Neidar** and **Klar** clans, gain their name from the foothills where they live. They have tan skin, ruddy cheeks, and bright eyes. Their hair is brown, black, or gray, worn in respectable trim around the ears but long and bushy in beards and mustaches. Their clothes reflect the drab colors of their lands: black, brown, gray, tan, and beige. On rare occasions (when feeling festive or scandalous), hill dwarves don a scarf of bright red or green. They prefer knee-high boots, large meals, and little work. Although Neidar have deep, resonant voices, cajoling one to sing (sober) is quite beyond the capacity of most folk.

**Mountain dwarves**, unlike their Neidar kin, dwell below ground in the rugged heights of the mountains. The most ancient and prominent race of mountain dwarves is the **Hylar**, from which the **Theiwar**, **Daewar**, **Daergar**, **Zakhar**, and hill dwarf races descended. Hylar dwarves have light brown skin, smooth cheeks, and bright eyes. They prefer to match their clothing to their brown, black, gray, or white hair. With wide vocal range, Hylar dwarves often form choruses and sing traditional songs in the resonant depths of their mountains.

**Gully dwarves**, or **Aghar**, are not true dwarves but a cross-breed. They appear later in their own section.

#### attitudes and lifestyles

Other races accuse dwarves of miserly greed. Dwarves see themselves quite differently. Dwarves believe their hard work and drive make them worthy of riches. Those who would disagree are lazy and jealous. Among themselves, dwarves consider dogged work and opulent wealth to be two of life's greatest pleasures. For these things, and for drink and history and song, dwarves harbor a passionate love. Around big folk (or elven folk), dwarves hide this passion, and therefore seem inscrutable, coarse, and oddly reticent.

Dwarven distaste for stealth and petty trickery drastically reduces the number of dwarven thieves on Ansalon. When dwarves turn to thievery, they tend to do so openly; dwarven thugs take what they want by force rather than stealth. Dark dwarves commonly become highwaymen and muggers. Dwarves also work as skilled fences for the black market.

All dwarves but Theiwar fear and dislike magic; they are a deeply nonmagical race. No non-Theiwar dwarves are mages. Any enchanted artifact of dwarven make, such as the *Hammer of Kharas*, is powered by Reorx, not sorcery. Dwarven priests frequently bless or even enchant items with Reorx's power.

**Passion:** Dwarven tempers can flare like a forge or smolder like embers. Despite their drab clothes and pessimism, they are



passionate folk. They live intensely, with little patience for contemplation or idleness. Their work is joyful; their play is serious. They are roused by grand, earthy music rife with percussion and deep-bellied horns. But a tender oboe, harp, or pipe can bring them to their knees. A dwarven chorus, whether on battlefield or in mead hall, sings at the top of its lungs.

**Comfort:** Although dwarves are not greedy, they like their creature comforts. "A good chair may outlast a good friend," says one dwarven proverb. Their industry and cleverness win for them many comforts and much money. And they indulge themselves.

With a lifespan that runs into multiple centuries, dwarves are natural-born collectors. They ornament their dwellings with tapestries, carvings, and statuary. They do not wear ornamentation except for heirlooms or medals.

**Hard work:** Dwarven children learn about responsibility at a young age. This training in self-discipline takes years, with responsibility building incrementally. Work becomes instinctual, and therefore, is rarely performed with complaints. Dwarves lose themselves in their work for weeks or months until the task is completed, then binge for a few weeks to celebrate their success. When dwarves work, they never slack off or delay; they achieve constant, focussed motion. Dwarves never retire; they only take up simpler work as they mature.

**Isolation:** Dwarves tend to be suspicious of races other than their own, including other dwarf races. They turn inward to their clan or their work rather than outward to the politics and deeds of the world.

Dwarves recognize their own sheltered lifestyle; they cherish bittersweet memories of a happier world gone by. Although they exercise great control over their own labors, they see the march of history as something beyond their influence. In the face of international calamities, dwarves often say "these things happen!" They rarely take setbacks personally, making them tena-

cious survivors. Dwarves see themselves as Reorx's custodians: maintaining the past in the present.

### **Racial quirks**

All dwarves see farther into the infrared than humans do, essentially allowing them to see in the dark. Hill dwarves tend toward obstinacy; they remain above ground due to stubbornness rather than lack of suitable mountains to delve. Their coarse manners, crude aspirations, and conspicuousness to non-dwarves rile their underground fellows. Even so, hill dwarves partake of a savage nobility and rugged independence that the pasty-skinned earth-dwellers secretly admire. The persistent complaining of hill dwarves is generally calculated to disguise a pleasant and gentle nature.

Mountain dwarves have enough problems underground to keep them from venturing into the world beyond. The classes and clans in each community create dangerous splits that have occasionally resulted in civil war. Such tensions keep the dwarves busy whenever they are away from their forges and looms. Unless a problem directly affects them, mountain dwarves will ignore it. Of course, appeals to higher dwarven nature can soften the aloof facade and force a dwarf to undertake most any worthwhile quest.

### **History**

**Beginnings:** Dwarves believe they were Reorx's last and best creations, made in the god's image. Reorx, they say, learned from each creation until he achieved the perfect form-dwarves. Although others on Krynns foolishly believe that dwarves are deviations created by the Graystone, such folk don't live in dwarvish skin. If they did, they would know how patently false this lie is. The notion that dwarves share blood with kender and gnomes is utter blasphemy. Such ideas start wars.

The first great dwarven kingdom lives now only in legend. Kal-Thax, or "Cold Forge," was a land extending from Karthay into the plains of Istar. Dwarves fleeing the Graystone began delving Kal-Thax in 4100 PC and didn't stop digging until 3900 PC. A century later, the dwarves abandoned their tunnels, moving south to lands richer in mineral wealth. The migration splintered, and during the next century, small colonies of dwarves delved underground villages in nearly every mountain of Ansalon.

The next great kingdom of the dwarves arose at Thoradin, "New Hope," which was delved between 3150 and 3000 PC. As their tunnels deepened, the miners unearthed the magical dragonstones. Their careless disposal of these stones brought about the Second Dragon War. In 2640 PC, the dwarves closed Thoradin's gates in shame.

The "New Best Hope," Thorbardin, rose in the distant Kharolis mountains. The city had reached grand proportions by 2600 PC. Its influence spread northward until it clashed with Ergoth's southward expansion in 2189 PC. Tensions between the dwarves and Ergoth led to the War of the Mountain from 2128 to 2073 PC.

Exhausted from the prolonged Kinslayer War with Silvanesti, Ergoth negotiated a peace. In 2073 PC, the Swordsheath Scroll set a buffer between Ergoth and Thorbardin by creating the new nation of Qualinesti for disaffected Silvanesti elves. Dwarves forged the hammer of Kharas in 2072 PC as a gift to Ergoth to reinforce the Swordsheath peace.

Much to everyone's surprise, the Qualinesti elves became fast allies of Thorbardin. As a symbol of elven, human, and

dwarven unity, the three races built the fortress of Pax Tharkas in the pass between Thorbardin and Qualinesti.

With two centuries of international involvement drawing to a close, the dwarven kingdoms turned their attention inward. This isolation brought great suffering for dwarves in the Cataclysm. Thorbardin was nearly devastated.

Thorbardin had become heavily dependent upon Abanasinia, Pax Tharkas, Qualinesti, and Xak Tsaroth for food. In addition to numerous mountain dwarf cities below ground, Thorbardin had to feed many hill dwarf settlements above ground, outside the mountain gates.

The Cataclysm decimated Thorbardin's trade routes and sources of food. Duncan, king of Thorbardin, checked the granaries and food reserves. The kingdom could not hope to feed all its people. Reasoning that those above ground could scavenge while those below could not, Duncan reluctantly closed Thorbardin to the outside world. The hill dwarves had to fend for themselves.

But the Cataclysm brought hill dwarves flocking to Thorbardin for safety. The gates remained shut. None heeded their pleas. This cold-hearted action—or inaction—on Thorbardin's part became known as the Great Betrayal. It split the Neidar forever from the Hylar and sparked hatred between hill and mountain dwarves. The Klar, hill dwarves trapped inside at the time of the Cataclysm, went insane trying to claw their way free. In 39 AC, Neidar allied themselves with humans in an attempt to retake Thorbardin. This was the Dwarfgate War. It ended in failure.

The mountain dwarves blamed humans for the Cataclysm and severed all ties with the outside world. This isolation intensified the internal strife of Thorbardin. Aftershocks of the Cataclysm had caved in the highways that linked the cities. Dwarven families were further separated by class pride. Common miners and laborers broke from the elite architects and engineers, turning their hands to dark and hateful deeds. Thorbardin quickly became a hollow city, where a once-great culture loomed larger than the present civilization.

To this day, most dwarf kingdoms remain closed to the outside world. The hatred between the hill dwarves and the underground dwarves still remains high.

### **GOVERNMENT AND CLAN**

Dwarves have always been divided into clans. Each clan is led by a thane—the clan ruler and representative to the Council of Thanes. The Council of Thanes is the ruling body for all dwarves upon Ansalon. Traditionally, the council has had nine thrones. Currently, only six thanes serve upon the Council: Hornfel of the Hylar, Realgar of the Theiwar, Rance of the Daergar, Gneiss of the Daewar, Tufa of the Klar, and Highbulp of the Aghar. The throne of the Neidar has been vacant since the Dwarfgate Wars in 39 AC. The eighth throne belongs to the Kingdom of the Dead—the nation of ancestors long past. This throne is perpetually empty. The ninth throne is that of the High King over all Dwarves. It has been vacant since the time of Duncan. A mysterious dwarven race called the Zakhar has never held a throne in the Council of Thanes.

Each of the following groups is considered a separate race.

**Hylar:** This is the oldest and noblest dwarven race. Most of the great dwarven kings have been Hylar. The Hylar traditionally occupy the best accommodations a nation can provide and are great craftsmen.

**Daewar:** This clan, loyal to the Hylar, has produced many

of its own important heroes over the years. The Daewar fight fiercely; they led the defense of Thorbardin in the Dwarfgate War. In addition to battle, the Daewar champion public safety and public works.

**Neidar:** These hill dwarves lived outside Thorbardin during the Cataclysm. They no longer have representation on the Council of Thanes—a situation many hill dwarves would like to remedy.

**Klar:** These hill dwarves were trapped in the collapsing tunnels of Thorbardin during the Cataclysm. After a week and a half of clawing, they pulled themselves out. Many Klar have been unstable or insane ever since. Following the Dwarfgate War, the Klar were deprived of property and were subjugated to slavery because of their alleged sympathy with the Neidar. (In fact, many Klar fought with berserk bravery on the Hylar side.) Now they serve the wealthy dwarves of Thorbardin in menial roles. They seek a leader to deliver them.

**Theiwar:** These strange, degenerate dwarves hate light: it nauseates them. Theiwar are dark dwarves. In their lightless caverns, they dream of world conquest and domination. Theiwar consider themselves the highest of the dwarven races. They work to topple the Council of Thanes and seize control, even by civil war if they must.

Unlike any other race of dwarves, Theiwar love magic; most of their leaders have spell-casting abilities. They use their magic to attack creatures that live in the light.

They passionately distrust outsiders and kill them if given the slightest chance. Their devious and shrewd natures provide them many such chances.

Theiwar have exaggerated, repulsive features: bulging and watery eyes, white or yellow skin and hair, and wiry bodies, which they drape in black, loose clothing.

**Daergar:** These dark dwarves split from the Theiwar several centuries ago. Their culture has spread far and grown powerful. They exceed even their Theiwar cousins in murder, torture, and thievery. Their leader, the most powerful warrior of the Daergar kingdom, wins his post by slaying all opponents in a bloody spectacle.

Daergar are hot-tempered, brutal, and utterly without honor on the battlefield. They never grant mercy.

Daergar have light-brown skin and smooth cheeks. Their hair is black or gray, their eyes deep brown or violet. They are somewhat stockier than other dwarves.

**Aghar:** The gully dwarves are described in their own section, following this one. They are represented in the Council by the Highbulp, a much-beloved genius among his people. Although his seat on the Council grants him great dignity, he often sleeps through meetings.

**Zakhar:** These strange dwarves occupy the ruins of Thoradin. They call themselves Zakhar, or “cursed people” because they were infected by a terrible mold that almost decimated them. They call their land Zhakar, or “cursed place” because of its ruined halls. They work with slow diligence to rebuild their kingdom, intending to make it as powerful as Thorbardin.

The Zakhar have never held a throne on the Council of Thanes.

**Kingdom of the Dead:** The old dwarven saying, “More of our kind dwell among the dead than among the living,” demonstrates the dwarven veneration of the dead. Dwarves consider the Kingdom of the Dead the 8th dwarven kingdom. Although the dead rarely enter into votes taken in the Council of Thanes, they continually enter the minds of the

dwarves. Dwarves use various divinations—some real, some imagined—to converse with their ancestors.

**The High King:** The High King rules all dwarves of Ansalon. The Council of Thanes chooses this ruler, who is then ordained by the people. The High King may come from any clan. Legends foretell the next ruler shall be the one bearing the lost Hammer of Kharas—the magical artifact used to forge dragonlances. Currently, the throne of the High King stands vacant.

### Tools, Technology, and Weapons

Although dwarves cannot match gnomish ingenuity, in metalworking and mining crafts dwarves are peerless. Dwarves are the armorers and weaponsmiths of Krynn. They also engineer the great war-machines: catapults, rams, and siege towers—weighty juggernauts all.

On an individual scale dwarves prefer to use weapons and armor made specifically for their stature. Dwarven hammers, battle axes, and swords are heavy, thick tools, counter-weighted at the tip to lend weight to their swing. Only dwarves and creatures of great brawn can use dwarf-fitted weapons without penalty. Others often fail to even lift them!

As dwarves revere tradition, and battle training is among those traditions handed down from father to son, each race has its own favorite weapons and styles of armor, from flails to spears to crossbows; from chain to plate to studded leather. The Zakhar favor the most uncommon weapons, including a razor-edged slasher mace, a sickle hook that can be thrown like a dagger, and a blowgun, which fires barbed darts. Zakhar warriors wear beetle carapace beneath padded robes.

One distinctively dwarven tool is the gapper, a six-foot long flat, metal bar with metal cuffs and thumbscrews at each end. Dwarven explorers often carry these bars for vaulting awkwardly high (for dwarves) barriers and sliding down holes. A group with gappers can link them end-to-end to form a chasm bridge.





## gully dwarves ("dirt eaters")

### appearance

The Aghar—or "Gully Dwarves:" as they are often called—are short and squat cousins of the Hylar. They do not cut striking figures. Lack of sanitation and medicine mars their skin with scars, boils, sores, and brown splotches. Both sexes have unkempt hair of dirty blond, brown, rust, gray, or dull black. Males wear long, scruffy beards; females have some cheek down but no beards. Their eyes are watery blue, dull green, brown, or hazel. Their narrow fingers have overly large knuckles and their legs tend to be knock-kneed. Both sexes carry pot bellies and develop wrinkles soon after age 25.

Thanks to poor living conditions, most gully dwarves are smeared with enough grime and soil to support a small garden. Their bedraggled clothes host a bevy of parasites. Aghar lucky enough to possess jewelry wear it conspicuously and garishly. All told, the filth and rags and mismatched jewelry sometimes cast the gender of any particular Aghar in doubt.

Aghar breed prodigiously; females average 20 children—often bearing one per year until age 45. Six of these 20 are likely survive to adulthood. Gully dwarf children reach maturity by age 5. Those who avoid starvation, disease, violence, and accidents live up to 55 years. Most expire before age 35.

Aghar average 4' tall, and 120 lbs.

### attitudes and lifestyles

Aghar are proud, long-suffering survivors. Beneath a cheerful and hapless appearance beats a tenacious heart. The Aghar have survived, even thrived, in conditions that would kill any other dwarf. Those who accuse Aghar of treachery and stupidity are listening to their noses instead of their hearts.

Gully dwarves have crude and primitive societies. They live in hovels and ramshackle huts near sewers, dumps, gulleys,

rivers, or swamps. They dwell in family units; any given area holds only enough resources for small family groups to survive. Children learn from hard knocks or from their parents; Aghar have no formal education.

Gully dwarves are incapable of the focussed mental effort required to wield magic. They are superstitious, fascinated by showy legerdemain, but powerful spells frighten them. They hold magical items in disdain because such magic comes from their persecutors. They do, however, have the faith needed to perform clerical miracles.

As thieves, Aghar work best as cat burglars. They cannot rob others through strength or wit. Aghar might, however, gang up and sap a lone traveler.

**Religion:** Aghar believe Reorx, patron deity of all dwarves, has abandoned them. Gully dwarves therefore appeal to the spirits of departed ancestors to protect them from harm and ensure their survival. Aghar universally believe that inanimate objects hold great power granted by the ancestral spirits. Possession of such objects grants the spirits' power to the owner.

The most powerful items, say the wisest gully dwarves, are those that *seem* to do nothing at all: old bones, fruit, chunks of colorful rock, and so forth. Aghar examine items for a long time before declaring them holy; not just any rock, stick or bone will do. Other races interpret this as more gully dwarf stupidity. Gully dwarves consider this proof of their strong faith.

**Survival:** Individually, gully dwarves are harder to kill than cockroaches. Survival is the chief virtue in their minds: to live is to win, to die is to lose. Consequently, they have raised groveling to an art form; they spill sensitive information at the slightest threat. Most Aghar (wisely) run from violence unless their homes are at stake. Other races brand such behavior as shameless cowardice and treachery. Gully dwarves see no shame, cowardice, or treachery in survival.

Even so, Aghar do not *work* at surviving. They do not plan for the future, but rather, run from the past.

**Pride:** Despite their glaring faults, gully dwarves take themselves seriously. Continual escapes from disaster imbue them with a sense of rugged pride. Because they never receive help from other races, they assume they don't need help.

**Innumeracy:** Gullytalk, the recently discovered language of gully dwarves, has no word for numbers greater than two. In gullytalk, "one" is singularity, "two" is plurality. The constant poverty of gully dwarves negates the need for any greater differentiation. They have no money to count, no possessions to value, and nothing to sell.

**Cheerfulness:** Despite heinous persecutions, gully dwarves maintain a hopeful outlook. They have determined, defiant spirits and a relentless cheerfulness. Persecutions past only point out the insignificance of present troubles. Hope is the foundation of survival.

**Clannishness:** Although apparently cowardly, gully dwarves never sell out a friend. If a non-Aghar wins their trust, gully dwarves treat their new fellow well. Often, such friendships include the most important advice an Aghar can impart: when the time is right to flee from a present danger.

**Cunning:** Aghar intelligence is routinely underestimated by the so-called "intelligent races." This slight does not offend gully dwarves; being underestimated allows them great latitudes for behavior, and the chance to surprise their foes. Gully dwarves, especially the kings and adventurers, play the fool only to manipulate true fools.

**Gluttony:** Because they often live on so little, gully dwarves



delight in abundance. They gorge themselves one day, knowing they will face famine the next. This insatiable appetite extends beyond food; Aghar love huge swathes of bright cloth, a surplus of rope or leather, or just about any goods in large quantities.

**Gullytalk:** Despite longstanding prejudices to the contrary, gully dwarves are not imbeciles. They speak in broken and halting sentences because Common is not their native tongue. In fact, Aghar speech, which is ugly, convoluted, and incomprehensible to non-Aghar, makes perfect sense among gully dwarves: they are speaking gullytalk.

Gullytalk is not a formal language, but a patois that shifts constantly and has a genius for borrowed terms. Aghar who live near elves chatter in what sounds like broken elvish, those who live near dwarves seem to speak pidgin dwarvish, and so forth.

Gully dwarves love to invent new words, and new ways to use and abuse them. Gullytalk evolves so rapidly scholars cannot study it. Not even brilliant non-Aghar can speak gullytalk, except with the aid of magic.

When two groups of gully dwarves meet, their dialects fuse after a few days, creating another hybrid patois. In addition to constantly redefining words, gullytalk continually remakes the basic grammatical rules of language. Thus, gullytalk cannot and should not be written down: the symbols would cease to have meaning within a month of their being penned!

## history

Gully dwarves have an extensive oral tradition of their origins and history. Although the history of no two gully dwarf clans agree, the colorful narratives are ends in themselves. Gully dwarves, however, take them very seriously. The true origin of the Aghar follows.

Gully dwarves are fertile crossbreeds of outcast dwarves and outcast humans. They appeared at the time of the Graystone. The hybrid unfortunately lacked the best traits of both parents.

Noting these deficiencies, humans and dwarves banned further intermarriages. The crossbreeds were driven out of their own clans, particularly by the dwarves, who regarded them as a blight. The new race proclaimed itself the Aghar, "the anguished," and learned to survive on the refuse of civilized folk. They were also called "Muckers" or "Dumpmen." Humans christened them gully dwarves, due to their low and squalid station. To this day, the Aghar feel betrayed by their forbears, and have little love for either humans or dwarves.

The Cataclysm that doomed the world saved the gully dwarves. Destruction of Ansalon's high civilizations created dozens of ruined cities where the gully dwarves could dwell. Soon once-mighty cities like Xak Tsaroth became havens for the Aghar. Undisturbed by their tormenters, the Aghar established their own culture, such as it is.

## Tools, Technology, and Weapons

Gully dwarf tools are usually scavenged or makeshift affairs. Aghar have no skill in crafting useful items. However, given time, a gully dwarf can usually coax one more use out of a device that others would consider spent.

Gully dwarves are also master improvisers: they can turn a broken pot into a serviceable helmet, a nail and some boards into a rat trap, or a scrap of metal and a string into an alarm.

Street fighters, Aghar willingly kick, bite and use dirty tricks to insure victory. In weapons, they favor clubs, knives, daggers, hand axes and saps, although a few have learned to use slings.

## Elves ("firstborn")

### appearance

Ansalonian elves are lithe, elegant creatures with pointed ears, thin limbs, and graceful movements. They stand about five feet tall, although they give an impression of greater height. Most weigh between 90 and 100 pounds. They have no facial hair. Elves are considered adults from the age of 80. They live to be about 550 years old before leaving the world, though some are as many as 700 years old.

**Silvanesti** are fair-skinned. Their hair ranges from light brown to blonde-white, and their eyes are hazel. They prefer loose garments, flowing robes, and billowing capes. Their clothes are various shades of green and brown. They speak in melodic tones and move with a natural grace.

**Qualinesti** are smaller and darker than the Silvanesti, with eyes of blue or brown and hair ranging from honey-brown to blonde. They are not as strikingly attractive as the Silvanesti. They prefer earth-toned clothing. They have strong, pleasant voices and a friendly, open manner. They prefer long dresses for women and woven trousers and jerkins for men.

**Kagonesti** are about the same size as Qualinesti and Silvanesti, but they are much more muscular. Their dark brown skin is traced with designs in clay, paint, and tattoo. Most have dark hair, ranging from black to light brown; elders have silvery white hair. All have hazel eyes. Kagonesti wear fringed leather clothes decorated with feathers, and adorn themselves with jewelry of silver and turquoise.

**Dargonesti** and **Dimernesti**, the sea elves, are barbaric aquatic creatures who appear quite different from their elven cousins. These races have rubbery bluish skin, wide eyes with narrow pupils, and webbed fingers and toes. Although they swim well in their elven form, they can also take the shape of sea otters (Dimernesti) and dolphins (Dargonesti).

**Half-elves** strongly resemble their elven parent but males



have the un-elfen capacity to grow facial hair. They are slightly taller and somewhat stockier than most elves. Though universally beautiful, they lack the unearthly grace of their elfen parentage.

### Common Ground

Elves see farther into the infrared wavelengths of the spectrum than humans do, giving them the ability to see in the darkness—they call it elvensight. They embrace all forms of magic.

While the civilized elves, Silvanesti and Qualinesti, share many cultural advances, disputes over land or politics can make them bitter enemies, as the Qualinesti exodus proves. Kagonesti, Dargonesti, and Dimernesti are labeled barbarians by their cousins; they clash with anyone not of their tribes. Despite their differences, all elves share some common philosophies:

**Shaping:** Elves believe in the perfectibility of nature; if they shape the world, its beauty will shine forth. Of course, they also believe themselves the creatures most capable of directing this shaping. They see Ansalon as a garden in need of tending and see themselves as the gardeners. Their fierce territorialism arises from this intense involvement in their lands. Elven protectiveness often makes them close their kingdoms to strangers, the way mothers protect their children from viruses by preventing them from playing with their friends. Most elves grow bitterly homesick when removed from their lands.

**Foresight:** Elves live for centuries and plan accordingly. Rather than glorifying or dwelling on the past, they look to the future. Their long lifespans and patient pursuit of goals sometimes make them seem cold, uncaring, or arrogant to shorter-lived races. In fact, elves deliberately maintain a distance from other races, wanting to avoid the inevitable grief of watching generation upon generation of these mortals die.

**Pride:** Elves, conscious of their race's achievements, take offense easily. Few other races appreciate the elfen gift of civilization, their role as the chosen of the gods, and their clear cultural superiority. Elves don't despise other races, but they are painfully aware of their shortcomings.

Elves also see other races' attempts at art as crude and transient. Because elfen crafts attain high standards that allow them to withstand the ravages of time, elves point out shoddy craftsmanship whenever they find it. Tools and clothes made by other races cannot last the centuries of an elf's life.

**Hedonism:** Elves rarely brood over the past or deny themselves their appetites. Although they are capable of scrimping and sacrificing, toiling for irksome days as dwarves do, elves refuse to do so. If difficult work presents itself, elves engage it joyfully. Despite (or because of) their long lives, elves seize each day as a rare gift.

Elves do feel sorrow, loss, and regret, but they don't savor or dwell on these emotions. They spend life looking forward to the next day, the next joke, and the next new friend. Even elfen lives are too short for drudgery.

**Trades:** From the age of accountability into adulthood, an elf must enter his family's guild and learn a trade. Elves generally do not think of this as limiting. They see skills as generational, handed down from father to son.

### Diversities

**Silvanesti** are a proud, arrogant, and stoic folk with little use for other races, including other elves. They idealize racial purity. They are intolerant of "inferior" races and customs.

The long years-before the recent War of the Lance—that Silvanesti was a safe, settled, empire stratified the crafts and tasks into a rigid system of castes, or Houses. At the top of the system is House Royal, the descendants of Silvanos. Beneath this house are craftsmen and guild houses, such as House Mystic, House Gardener, and House Woodshaper. House Protector, also known as the Wildrunners, serves as the army of Silvanesti. The lowest guild is House Servitor, which includes apprentices, foreign traders, indentured servants, and slaves. No one marries outside his or her guild without permission, and permission is rarely granted.

Silvanesti rarely communicate with the outside world, finding it far too transient for their liking. They also rarely marry outside their own realms. Silvanesti have endured for over 3,000 years, and have become set in their ways. Silvanesti abhor contact with humans or other races. Even their relationship with the Qualinesti is strained.

**Qualinesti** are more sociable and tolerant than Silvanesti; they frequently and happily deal with other races. They do, however, share some of the Silvanesti's prejudice against interracial marriages.

Qualinesti society is far less structured than that of Silvanesti. The Qualinesti are ruled by a Speaker of the Suns who must be a blood relative of Kith-Kanan, the elfen leader who established Qualinesti. Speakers are thus also blood relations of Silvanos. The Thalash-Enthia, or senate, is appointed to represent the various guilds and communities of Qualinesti. The Thalash-Enthia brings its recommendations to the Speaker of the Suns, who makes all final determinations.

**Kagonesti, Dargonesti, and Dimernesti** work to achieve harmony with nature for a full, happy life. They are fiercely proud folk, hot-tempered and passionate. While these barbarians do not initiate wars or attack strangers, they are by no means pacifists.

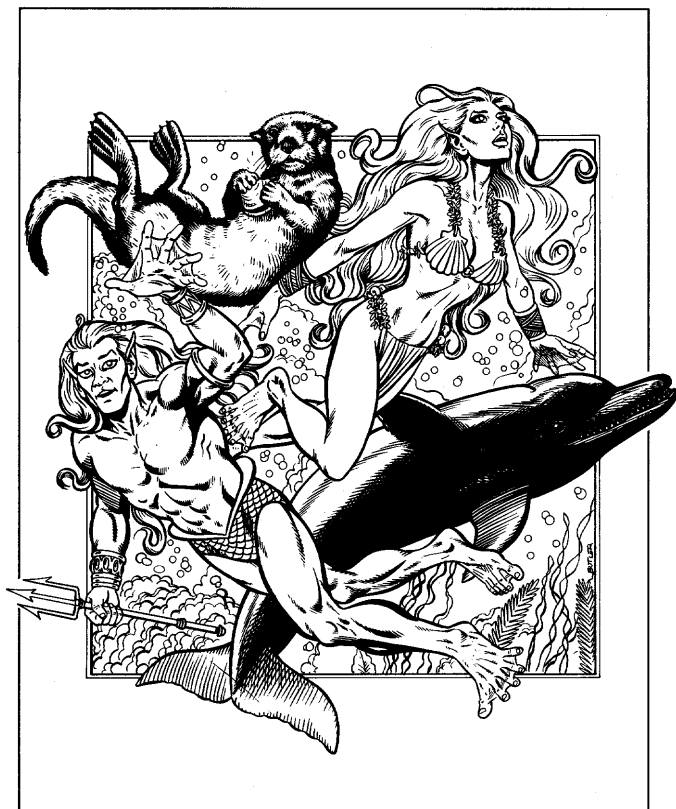
Kagonesti have no permanent settlements. Their villages are temporary structures of animal hide and light wood. They use the boughs of living trees for construction and camouflage. Each village is home to a tribe of several interrelated families. The tribe centers around the chief—the oldest and wisest member—who makes all decisions for the tribe.

Kagonesti have an animistic view of the cosmos: they believe that everything is alive and deserves respect. This respect extends especially to the dead, who are dressed in finery and set afloat upon funeral canoes.

The lifestyles of the two sea-elf races are wrapped in mystery, as few land elves have visited their homelands beneath the waves. It is known both races have the ability to shape-change, Dargonesti taking on the form of dolphins, and Dimernesti becoming sea otters. Rumors suggest that sea elves are weakened in strength when they leave the water.

**Half-elves**, raised in an atmosphere of shame, learn insecurity and uncertainty. Some few grow anti-social. Others trust strangers but have difficulty establishing true and lasting friendships. Many are natural leaders, but few feel worthy of a leader's responsibility. Regardless of their disposition, all half-elves are loners: brooding, quiet, and struggling with self-doubt. They may overcompensate for their insecurity by performing acts of death-defying bravado.

No society or community on Ansalon consists solely of half-elves. Although some half-elves learn trades, most drift from place to place. The Qualinesti grudgingly provide a home for half-elves. Among the Qualinesti, half-elves are treated coldly, but not totally ostracized.



## history

The elves sprang into being from chaos as embodiments of Good. They stood tall and stately, like the trees from which they were formed.

Elves believe they were the firstborn of the world. When first awakened during the Age of Dreams, elves lay scattered across the land like stars across the sky. The passage of the Graystone altered some land elves into sea elves—the Dimernesti and Dargonesti. Both developed cultures independent of main elven histories. They live even now in distant obscurity and peace, though trade exists between elves of the land and those of the sea.

The land elves sought peace with the world, yet peace was not always possible to achieve. Silvanos, a powerful elven warrior and a great traveler, wandered the deep woods all across Ansalon, visiting the scattered clans. He proposed the building of a great elven nation.

Silvanos convened the first Sinthal-Elish (Council of the High Ones). There, many households and clans swore allegiance to Silvanos and the fledgling Silvanesti. But once construction was started, dragons awoke in the world. They objected to the location the elves had chosen. The contest became the first Dragon War.

After the elven victory and the second Sinthal-Elish, Silvanos built Silvanost in the former dragon woods. He granted lands to all the elves, establishing the kingdom of Silvanesti along the lines of the fallen ogre civilizations.

The Ergothian Empire began to encroach on the borders of Silvanesti and Thorbardin under Silvanos' son Sithel. In time, marriages between Wildrunner elves and humans occurred.

While hunting in the borderlands with his twin sons Sitahs and Kith-Kanan, Sithel was killed. Some say the human arrow that slew him found its mark by accident. Others say humans killed Sithel to remove barriers to their expansion. Whatever

the case, the Kinslayer War resulted.

The Silvanesti-based Wildrunners tried to drive the humans back. But the mixed marriages of the region meant that loyalties were not always obvious. Many elves who had married humans sided with Ergoth. Younger son Kith-Kanan thus led Silvanesti's western forces against their own kin. After more than 40 years, the war ended in a truce.

By this time, the western high elves had grown tired of the rigid caste system of Silvanesti. They declared their independence, tempting civil war.

In secret negotiations with Ergoth, Sithas solved several problems simultaneously. In 2073 PC, the Swordsheath Scroll was signed and the nation of Qualinesti was formed, both as a buffer between the former antagonists, and as a place where the dissenters could establish their own nation.

Kith-Kanan recognized his twin's decree as exile, but could find no other hope for his people. Kith-Kanan established his kingdom and never returned east.

Following the formation of Qualinesti, the Silvanesti remained in self-imposed isolation until King Lorac Caladon established a flourishing trade with the northern empire of Istar. In time, the Cataclysm again sealed the borders of Silvanesti and the elves withdrew from the rest of the world.

Silvanesti elves blamed the arrogant Istarian Kingpriest, and thus humans, for abusing the elven gift of civilization and precipitating the Cataclysm. This feeling has only reinforced their distrust of humans. That their own isolationism made them equally responsible, they ignore.

The Qualinesti also suffered from the Cataclysm. Other races have often raided them for food and riches. Their dreams of shaping cities other than their glorious capital are all but forgotten as they struggle simply to maintain what they already hold.

## Tools, Technology, and weapons

The elven people are not an overly inventive race, given more to artistic endeavors than to mechanical ones. However, the quality of their craftsmanship is undeniable. Millennia spent attending to perfection allow elves to surpass even dwarves in the quality of certain weapons, including the forked arrowhead—razor-sharp, Y-shaped heads used for cutting ropes and banners, and shooting small birds—and the singing arrowhead, a hollow metal bulb fitted onto a normal point, that gives a piercing shriek when fired. Singing arrowheads may also be adapted as fire arrows.

Elven armor is renowned for its resiliency and light weight. Leather-based armor is favored by common land elves, while nobles prefer high-quality elven scale or chain mail. Kaggnes-ti warriors wear hide armor. Sea elves substitute sharkskin for leather armor and use special scale mail that does not rust and allows free movement.

Several items of elven clothing deserve note. None of these items is ever sold, though they may be given to non-elves as gifts. Neutral gray or mottled elven cloaks blend into the woods, camouflaging the wearer and making him nearly undetectable when standing still. Soft elven boots of bugbear hide allow wearers to move silently. The rare firebane cloak is treated with heat-absorbing oils from the elathas plant. This cloak makes the wearer nearly undetectable in forests and completely invisible to elvensight (which perceives the heat-producing infrared spectrum). If drawn tightly about the wearer, a firebane cloak grants some protection against fire as well.



## GNOMES ("Tinkers")

Other races sometimes see the gnomes as single-minded or laughable; gnomes see others as unable to focus, hopelessly stuck on magic, and unable to keep up with the quick pace of a gnomish mind.

Gnomes dwell in isolated pockets throughout Ansalon, so far removed from human traffic that they are often placed with pixies and sprites as semi-magical myths. Gnomes enjoy and support this misconception.

### appearance

Gnomes stand 3 feet tall and weigh about 45-50 pounds. All gnomes have rich brown skin, the tone of polished wood, with white hair, blue or violet eyes, and straight white teeth. Males have soft, curly beards and moustaches; females are beardless. Both sexes develop wrinkles at age 50. Gnomes are short and stocky, but their movements are quick and their hands are deft and sure. They have rounded ears and large noses.

Gnomes have miserable fashion sense, dressing themselves in outlandish garb. Tools and notebooks bristle from the pockets of their outfits, even if they are not members of the tinker class. It's in their blood.

### attitudes and lifestyles

All gnomes share a few common traits:

**Fast-Talk:** Gnomes speak intensely and rapidly, running words together in unending sentences. Gnomes can simultaneously speak and listen carefully. If two gnomes meet, each babbles at the other, often answering questions later in their dialogue as part of the same continuous sentence. Gnomes have learned to speak slowly around other races, in a some-



times condescending and irritating fashion. Gnomes consider other folk, who are incapable of keeping up with their rapid speech, a bit slow-witted. If frightened, startled, or depressed, gnomes clip sentences.

Gnomes rarely provide sufficient explanation of any topic unless pinned down with direct questions. This oversight occurs because they assume a gnomish degree of general knowledge. An uncurious visitor may be led past ten wonders of Mount Nevermind, being told, "Don't step on that", "Mind the gap", and "Duck." Gnomes have 34 ways to say "Look out," each detailing a direction and intensity of danger.

**Bluntness:** Gnomes lack social graces that other races take for granted. They are always eager to talk shop, compare notes, and work on their projects; in all their hurry and bustle, they often forget to be polite. Their joy in their work gives them less energy for polite gestures, careful requests, or compliments. They brusquely steamroll people's feelings. Gnomes don't mind this among themselves, but when they start ordering other races around, problems arise.

**Technocracy:** Gnomes place great faith in their machines; some gnomes even believe that the machines need a tinker's fervent faith to work. Further, gnomes believe in constantly improving their machines. Why trust a task to a single lever, even if it performs efficiently? What if the lever should fail? By replacing the lever with a vast complication of dials and gadgets, the tinker minimizes a total shutdown from the failure of one part. Simplicity is, after all, for simpletons.

**Up with Gnomes!** Although gnomes have enormous national pride, they rarely boast. Their history shows gnomes at the center of the drama of gods and mortals. Gnome histories drip with entertaining, gnomocentric arrogance. Gnome children learn that gnomes forged the Dragonlances, their flying machines battled the dragons, and they were aided by the Companions of the Lance only in the final victory. Each year, more historical texts claim these facts, and these facts thus become more historical.

**Education:** Gnomes are scholastic pack-rats: they know something about everything, but cannot discriminate between useful and useless information. The most irrelevant small-talk can awaken epiphany. Careful questioning of a gnomish sage can unearth amazing gems of insight. No field of study is too obscure for a gnome.

**Flash:** Gnomes prefer style over substance. A gnomish illusionist's show is a marvel of color, timing, imagination, and staging. Gnomes know how to make a splash, how to draw a crowd's attention, and how to make an entrance.

When tinkering, a gnome will take a simple machine like a pulley and build on it until it is a nightmare of ropes, bells, whistles, and bellows that accomplishes the same task but does so more loudly and more elaborately. Their machines become bigger, better, and more prone to dramatic and exciting catastrophes. This is Progress.

**living Quarters:** Gnomes are homebodies, rarely wandering away from their warrens and projects. They dwell away from the blundering world of big folk and protect their villages with enchantments and charms. The villages themselves are loud, garish towns of continual noise and motion. Most gnomes never leave their native villages; those who do dislike the suspicious whispers of birds and crickets.

Tinker gnomes live in huge subterranean colonies of tunnels in secluded mountain ranges. The largest gnomish settlement is in Mount Nevermind. A metropolis of 59,000 has dwelt in the dormant volcano for millennia.

**Mount Nevermind:** The city of Mount Nevermind is built into the rock surrounding the central shaft of a volcano. Mount Nevermind bustles. Citizens scuttle, whistles blow, mechanical cars roll, gnomes fly (catapults called gnomefingers offer rapid travel from the Inner Hall to the 35 different city levels). Hundreds of staircases, ramps, pulley elevators, and ladders span the levels. Steam-powered cars mounted on rails encircle the city, providing fast transport on individual levels. The whole place is choked with smoke and sound and flashes.

Gnomes in industry may develop industrial diseases. Mild respiratory ailments and eye infections are common, but clear up with a few days in fresh air. Industrial accidents, noise, visual pollution, and other work-related problems can disable a gnome, sometimes leading to early retirement from active pursuits.

**Life Quests:** Gnomes are born tinkers and “scientists;” an individual chooses an area of specialization depending on his driving interests. When young, each gnome chooses a Life Quest, which is approved by the Guild subcommittee to which his or her family belongs. A gnome who chooses to study screws spends decades experimenting with thread sizes, metals, screwdriver types, and so forth. Rarely does a committee formally declare a Life Quest completed. Completion of a Life Quest means the gnome has performed so well that all that could possibly be known about the subject is now known. If a Life Quest is completed, the gnome’s soul and those of his forefathers are guaranteed a place beside Reorx in the hereafter.

Life Quests are highly specific and related to a technological device or process. Sometimes, unusual magical devices are studied to develop technological means of replacing them.

**Names:** Each gnome has three names. A gnome’s true name recounts the gnome’s entire family tree, extending back to creation. This history comprises a single, enormous word that can easily fill a large book. The complete names of every gnome born on Sancrist appear in a volume in the Genealogy Guild in the main library at Mount Nevermind.

Though each gnome knows his complete name (or at least the first few thousand syllables), most gnomes use a shortened form of address that takes merely half a minute to recite. This shorter name lists the highlights of the gnome’s ancestor’s lives. Humans use even shorter names: the first one or two syllables of a particular gnome’s name. Gnomes find this abbreviated name undignified, but endure it all the same.

**Occupations:** Gnomes make passable fighters and quick-fingered thieves. Thieving gnomes, however, are sometimes betrayed by their penchant for showmanship. Most prefer the direct sham and sting to sneaking and lifting. Those with a magical bent direct their talents for sleight of hand and showmanship to the study of illusion spells. In fact, no gnome practices generalist magic. Many gnomes deal in finely detailed crafts like jewelry. Their vision is more sensitive to infrared than the human sense, so gnomes can see in the dark.

## Religion

The only major deity gnomes recognize is Reorx. Though religious services and priests among them are rare, gnomes still respect Reorx and know (unlike many others in post-Cataclysm Ansalon) that he exists. To them, Reorx is, of course, a gnome who loves building, creating, inventing, and tinkering. Some philosophers even declare that the universe is Reorx’s machine—the sun and moons of Krynn are cogs in the world-gadget.

Although most gnomes revere Reorx, a small cult follows Shinare, goddess of industry. Members of this group attend services every sixth day. This group uses inventions such as the steelgrabber (an offering machine) and the organizer (a huge musical instrument that loudly duplicates any instrument on Krynn). At their services, the followers of Shinare petition her to inspire smoothly functioning machines. Heaven knows they need them.

## History

Gnomes—inventive, skillful, and enthusiastic—were the favored children of Reorx. Reorx forged the Graystone and imbued it with light and power. In about 3500 PC, he consigned the stone to the First King, gnomoi Aldinanachru. Aldinanachru placed it in the tower of Lunias atop Mount Garath on Taladas. Around 3100 PC, a gnomoi guard was tricked into releasing it, unleashing magical havoc upon Krynn as the stone drifted west. Reorx sent the largest clan of the gnomes to regain the enchanted stone.

The Graystone drifted across the Northern Courrain Ocean and the gnomes followed it in a fleet. They landed on the eastern shores of Ansalon and hurried after their quarry on foot. A mortal king imprisoned the stone in what would later be called the tower of Gargath. He would not relinquish it to the gnomes. They attacked and, in the ensuing battle, the Graystone of Gargath escaped. It transmogrified the gnomes there into dwarves and kender. The rest of the clan chased the stone west to Sancrist Isle.

There, most gnomes gave up the chase. They would not risk another dangerous sea voyage. Some few built ships and sailed west out of sight. Many other gnomoi clans migrated west to Sancrist; only a few remained on the continent.

Two notable events occurred after the Graystone’s escape. The first was the arrival of the Knights of Solamnia on Sancrist. As a result, gnomes have allied themselves with Solamnia and become important trade partners to it.

The second major event was the Cataclysm, which enlarged the size of Sancrist’s mountainous northern half, where most gnomes lived. Many gnomes died in landslides and collapsing tunnels. But over all, the seismic activity increased the available living space.

## Proverbs and folkTales

Gnome proverbs can take one to two days to recite, depending on their seriousness. Other races, on hearing (one of) these proverbs, pointed out that proverbs are more memorable when short and to the point.

Impressed, the gnomes convened a Proverb Committee. After months of deliberation, this committee distilled the three critical gnomish proverbs to their potent and poignant essence:

“Never.”

“A gear.”

“Hydrodynamics.”

The last, especially, brings tears to the eyes of older gnomes.

## Tools, Technology, and Weapons

Tinker gnomes possess greater technology than all the races of Krynn combined. Gnomes have mastered steam engines and coiled springs. They use steam-powered ships, clockwork timepieces, and ore-refining plants for high-grade steel,

as well as mundane objects like screws, pulleys, drive shafts, toothed gears, music boxes, and mechanical toys. Some legends even tell that the ancient kingdoms of Krynn had clock-work golems of gnomish design.

The gnomish attention to style and delicate craftsmanship results in inventions that border on the magical: miniature castles with mechanized knights and fire-breathing dragons, “bang-bugs” that sit quietly on the floor before exploding and flying away, folding-paper umbrellas, bubble-bath soap, spectacles, and gnomefingers, to name a few. Projects in the works include the silent, folding, automatically repeating crossbow; the net-throwing arrow; and the spring-loaded, blade-throwing, two-handed sword. The archives of Mount Nevermind brim with ill-fated inventions, awaiting a gnome willing to develop them further.

Sadly, gnomish mental distraction and fascination with detail tend to undercut their technology. Anything gnomish machines can do, magic can often do more cheaply, quickly, and efficiently. Generally speaking, gnomes who invent items exert as much effort, risk as much danger, and experience as much success as wizards who perform spell research.

### **gnomish Weapons**

When attacked, gnomes defend with whatever is handy: screwdrivers, hammers, frying pans, stools, flaming parchment, inventions, and so forth. If they are fighting a prepared battle, they use the regular assortment of weapons: light crossbows, slings, short bows, darts, and throwing axes at a distance, or footman’s maces, short swords, warhammers, and gnome picks in melee (hand-to-hand).

What’s a gnome pick?

A gnome pick is a 4-1/2’ hammer with a sturdy head balanced by a curved fluke used to pierce armor. A spike juts off the top of the hammerhead. Gnomes often add strange devices to improve their picks: hot coal chambers (which burn off the wooden haft in a surprisingly short while), whirling chains (which are likely to spin the gnome around and cause him to involuntarily attack all in a 2’ radius), and spring-loaded pincers (which do plenty of extra damage but tend to disarm the gnome wielding them).

Gnomes also field-test specially engineered war machines. A typical example is the belcher.

Belchers are gnomish cannons disguised to look like statues of dragons, gargoyles, or roses. Belchers use smoke powder to catapult canisters of deadly materials. These cannons weigh over a ton and must be based on either a sturdy wagon or a pivoting turntable for aiming. Only targets directly in front of the barrel or between its minimum arc range (30 yards) and maximum arc range (360 yards) can be hit.

Belcher canisters carry various payloads, including acid, chains, cinders, foam, naphtha, oil, and even water. Their likelihood of explosion increases with every firing, and doubles when, in the interests of science, the gnomes experiment with double payloads.

### **gnomish armor**

Gnomes wear all types of armor, including piecemeal amalgams of plate, chain, scale, brigandine, and studded hide, and whatever else is handy. Standard armor fare is a leather apron. Workman’s leather contains numerous pouches, pockets, loops and straps for tools and repair materials.



## **Kender (Children of The World®)**

### **appearance**

Adult kender resemble young teenage humans: aside from their pointed ears, they could pass as human youths. Despite their attenuate limbs, kender are well muscled. Most stand between 3’6” and 3’9” tall, although some few reach four and a half feet. Mature kender weigh between 85 and 105 pounds.

Hair coloration in kender ranges from sandy blonde to dark brown, with some coppery red or red-orange hues. Short-cropped shag haircuts are popular in Hylo, but Goodlund kender prefer longer hair: braids, ponytails, knots, and combed manes. Kender cannot grow beards or mustaches.

Although fair-skinned, kender tan quickly, becoming nut-brown by midsummer. Their eye color varies: pale blue, sea green, olive, light brown, and hazel. Their ears have points, much as elven ears do.

Typically, kender faces bear the intense, bright-eyed inquisitiveness of children. Happy kender grin madly; sad kender wear an intractable pout. When throwing taunts, kender look impish and shout in an incredibly grating tone. Their emotional intensity is infectious.

Kender clothing varies a great deal, but all wear durable, rustic outfits. Bright natural colors and ribbons accent clothing. Males wear shirts, pants or breeches, laced leggings, and soft leather boots or sandals. Females wear a tunic or dress, pants, and soft leather shoes or laced sandals. All kender wear vests, belts, or short cloaks with many pockets.

In their countless pouches, pockets, and belt packs, kender

carry a wide assortment of junk: feathers, stones, rings, string, teeth, toys, whistles, paper, charcoal sticks, ink, tinderboxes, buttons, chalk, figurines, handkerchiefs, marbles, mice, dried meat, bones, dried fruit, coins, candles, and so forth.

Kender live to 100 years and beyond, always retaining their youthful flair for life. Adulthood begins around 20 years, and old age sets in at 70. As kender age, their faces retain a youthful appearance, save for a deepening network of lines and crow's feet. Their hair grays gently, often starting at the temples. Kender consider this aged look attractive, and some accelerate it with mud packs to dry out their skin.

Kender voices range from the shrill tones of childhood to the husky growls of old age. Most kender can imitate bird and animal calls. When excited, kender speak very quickly or very loudly to make themselves heard. At other times, kender tend to ramble, producing convolute logic and illogic.

### **attitudes and lifestyles**

Kender of all ages share a childlike nature: curious, fearless, irrepressible, independent, lazy, taunting, and irresponsible with others' possessions.

**Curiosity:** Kender are curious about absolutely everything. They are natural explorers. They rifle the contents of locked cupboards and delve into deep caverns. "Anywhere a rat can go, two kender will be," quips a human proverb. Very little escapes a kender's notice. Kender study every detail in a room, no matter how often they have been there.

This curiosity extends especially to unusual things. Kender love magic items and rare creatures (chimeras, centaurs, unicorns, and dragons topping the list). Gadgets-especially gnomish gadgets-also catch kender eyes. Kender seek beauty in all things: they might prefer an old tarnished coin to a gleaming, newly minted one merely because the tarnished one is unique.

**Fearlessness:** Kender are often fearless. They cannot grasp their own mortality and thus feel invincible. This fearlessness combines with kender wonder to wash away any dread they may feel (and any common sense they may have). Kender fearlessness does not, however, equate to stupidity. In moments of danger, kender battle bravely while others cover behind. And kender rarely let their fearlessness endanger anyone but themselves.

Some tales suggest that kender can actually be frightened. Even so, these tales describe such monumental catastrophes that few kender have survived to be questioned about their feelings.

**Irrepressibility:** Not many people on Ansalon can shut a kender up or tie one down. Full of youthful energy, kender dread boredom and seek excitement, entertainment, and fun. Fun for a kender may mean spending hours watching an industrious ant climb over various obstacles. Sadly, though, risky undertakings hold at least as much allure for kender as safe ones. While other party members grimly gird themselves to follow a grueling trail with near-certain death at its end, a kender flippantly chooses to come "just for the fun of it."

**Independence:** Kender believe in the rights and freedoms of the individual. Kender nations have no real rulers because they prefer the freedom of anarchy. They resent being ordered about, and would rather do what they want, when they want. Demanding something of a kender only results in loud complaints, reluctant work, and taunts. But kender willingly volunteer for any task, as long as it is interesting.

Although they demand freedom of choice, kender often fail to consider the consequences of their actions. A kender's impulsive action may back him into a corner from which his comrades must save him. "I guess I shouldn't have opened that barricaded door with the warnings on it, huh?" Entire parties bristle when a kender utters that awful syllable, "Oops!"

**Compassion:** Kender make lifelong friends. They offer undying (though distracted) devotion and self-sacrifice to their companions. They always aid those who are hurt and they happily share their meager bounty with the less fortunate. The wounding of a dear friend sends kender into paroxysms of grief so plaintive that it can soften even the hardest heart.

Their big-hearted enthusiasm makes kender easily hurt by indifference or cutting remarks from friends. However, they quickly forgive and forget, and this endearing trait makes them extremely difficult to dislike.

**Dreaming laziness:** Dwarves say that kender are "good-for-nothing, lazy doorknobs." True, a kender performing drudgery is like a hobgoblin dancing: it looks and feels unnatural. Kender, however, are among the most industrious creatures of Ansalon-as long as they remain curious about their task. Work for work's sake is boring, tedious, and stodgy. Beautiful fields, clever dormice, and antic chipmunks are another matter entirely. Kender love dreams better than realities, and daydreams best of all.

They thrive on stories and storytelling. True stories are routinely modified to make them spectacular, fascinating, and satisfying. But kender willingly listen to any story, no matter how poorly (truthfully) rendered it is. Kender also love music





and dance. They have added chimes, bells, and whistles to all of their daily tools. Whether pounding nails into a barn roof or facing down a black dragon, kender always keep their beloved music close at hand.

**Taunting:** Kender, like human children, possess a calculating sense of insult. Their intense curiosity wins for them all sorts of shocking insights into a creature's private life. These insights become weapons in moments of wrath. Kender lash out not only to injure an enemy's pride, but to drive him to irrational behavior. An opponent's lapses in judgment following a kender taunt often allow the kender to land a killing blow.

**Handling:** Kender are oblivious to matters of ownership. If a kender needs something that another person is not using, the kender will innocently borrow the item and put it to use. Curious kender often pick up items for closer examination, then distractedly forget to put them back.

Although dwarves cannot distinguish this action (called "handling") from theft, handlers and thieves differ drastically. First of all, thieves steal for personal gain, but handlers take things due to curiosity and distraction. When a handler's curiosity shifts to a new item, he often loses the one he just picked up. Secondly, a thief always takes the most valuable item but a handler always takes the most interesting one. A handler will prefer a glittering shard of glass to a bagful of dull silver ore. Finally, thieves steal maliciously, knowing they break moral and governmental laws; but handlers take things innocently, unaware the rules governing property would make their actions malicious.

Although kender handlers demonstrate common thieving skills like lock picking, they are not thieves. Handlers take quick offense at accusations to the contrary. Even if caught in the act of handling, they have (and believe) many excuses:

- "I guess I found it somewhere."
- "You must have dropped it!"
- "I forgot I had it."
- "I was keeping it safe for you!"
- "You said you didn't want it anymore."
- "This looks just like yours, doesn't it?"
- "Maybe it fell into my pocket."

Kender live in quaint, pastoral villages and towns within the forests of Krynn. Maybe this is so they can climb the trees, play tag among the boughs or just laze in the shade. Their homes are a variety of incomplete structures: tree-houses, terraced decks, spacious huts, snug little burrows, and tree hollows. All dwellings blend beautifully with their environment. Looking upon a kender city, one sees only bountiful woodlands, winter squash and grape vines, raspberry bushes, and blossoming fruit trees. On closer examination, the city gate-perhaps a passage between sentinel oaks where a footbridge spans a creek-becomes clear. Hedges and gullies form the city's defenses and vines mask the porticoed buildings from view. Twisting stairs, rope ladders, and ropeways link the rooftops to each other and to the ground.

Kender have small immediate families with 2 or 3 children. For all the noise and fuss in a kender house, one would think there were dozens of children. Most kender happily stay at home, close to playmates. Sometime around age 20, kender are overwhelmed by a desire to wander and see the world. They travel for years, enjoying the mysteries of Krynn, before their wanderlust runs out and they settle down. Some kender draw maps of their journeys, maps that become fairly trustworthy and very detailed after they fiddle with them for years.

After wanderlust, kender become rooted in one place until death.

The sedentary nature of aged kender and young kender allows kender societies to crop up. Kender call their society an omnigarchy: rulership by everyone. They do whatever they please, so long as they do not harm each other. Kender value individuality and thus have no desire to force their opinions on others. Despite their blatant lack of law, common threats bring kender into quick cooperation. With little preparation, kender nations can field a formidable army.

Occasionally, the kender submit themselves to a ruler who seems interesting at the time. They have had kings, khans, warlords, councils, judges, and priestlords, many of whom have not been kender and all of whom have fallen from power within a month's time.

## History

The lessons of history stand firm: kender (like dwarves) arose when gnomes were transformed by the potent and unrestrainable magic of the Graystone of Gargath. All written histories agree on this fact.

Even so, a splinter group of scholars in Palanthus questions whether this derivation is accurate. They note the vast dissimilarities between gnomes (and dwarves) on the one hand and kender on the other. Kender are not industrious; they do not tinker or invent; they have no beards; they cannot focus on tasks at hand; they are not stout and stocky; they do not dwell underground; they do not have rounded ears.

Scholars who have enumerated these contrasts go on to say that kender share many traits with elves. They joyfully embrace life; they disregard work and time; they love woodlands and nature; they look for beauty in all things; they have pointed ears and no beards. Their capstone of evidence: the kender progenitor Balif was a close confidant of the great elf Silvanos, and even swore allegiance to Silvanos at the first Sinthal-Elish, several hundred years before the Graystone.

The scholars who have marshalled these arguments believe that kender arose when the Graystone transformed elves, not gnomes. This charge cannot be made lightly, for it flies in the face of every recorded history, especially that of Astinus's Iconochronos. Most scholars still support the histories as they stand, but the splinter scholars gain support daily.

Both sides agree, however, that the earliest known kender hero was Balif, a confidant of Silvanos. Balif fought in the Second Dragon War (often called the first because it was the first to involve all the peoples of Krynn), and established the kender nation Balifor. He died in 2750 PC.

A second kender nation appeared in northwestern Ansalon in 2600 PC. An entire clan of kender became trapped on the first floating citadel, which drifted northwest and crashed against the spine of the Sentinel Mountains. The kender named their new land Hylo after its citadel, which was high and then low, and after its high mountains and low plains. In 2200 PC Ergoth arose and forcibly annexed Hylo. The Rose Rebellion of 1800 PC returned the kender's independence.

The Cataclysm struck Hylo hard. All the kender settlements along the bay were swept under by tidal waves and the city of Hylo itself became a port town. The eastern half of the nation disappeared and the western half clung to the newly formed isle of Northern Ergoth.

The Cataclysm also decimated the land of Balifor, turning it into a desert waste. The kender left their homeland to barbaric

desert nomads and migrated north. They founded a small forest city on the edge of a human ruin (now called simply "the Ruins" by the kender who explore it). Some kender believe the Ruins are the remains of one of the missing Towers of High Sorcery.

After the Cataclysm, many kender refused to return to settled life, preferring to wander. Recently, the kender folk were mustered for war by one kender of note: Kronin Thistleknot. This charismatic leader is a powerful hunter-turned-warrior. He organized the resistance to the dragonarmy threat.

## Religion

Before the Cataclysm, certain kender could work miracles as priests of the gods. These kender priests never built places of worship, preferring to praise their gods beneath the open vault of the heavens.

In post-Cataclysm Ansalon, kender priests had all but vanished. During the War of the Lance, one kender lass purportedly encountered a true priest and received her own *Medallion of Faith* from him. She in turn studied and began attracting followers. The kender priesthood has been on the rise ever since.

Although kender recognize all the gods (as well as some nature spirits, eldritch beings, and potted plants), they hold four in highest regard: Branchala, Chislev, Mishakal, and Gilean. Kender generally consider Reorx a grumbling but benevolent grandfather, but do not praise him highly. Seacoast kender set Habbakuk high in their pantheons.

## Tools, Technology, and Weapons

Most kender implements serve as weapons, tools of one's profession, and musical instruments. Kender like to add personal touches to every tool, such as whistles, notches for tying bundles, and bright talismans of feather and fur.

All kender possess a makeshift set of lockpicking tools, wires, files, old keys, hardened leather placards, and beeswax.

For armor, most kender use only small shields, furs, padded armor, or leather armor. A rare few have been known to wear ring, studded, or chain mail, but companions say they were not well at the time.

## Kender Weapons

Kender fight with intuition and grace. Their specialized weapon/tools are deadly in the hands of kender, but clumsy in the hands of others.

Kender tools are commonly constructed of a flexible ironwood haft with leather, catgut, and metal adornment. The heavy "-pak" and "-ak" tools (like the polpak or battak) are frequently used by males, and the lighter "-pik" and "-ik" (like the whippik or bollik) are in general favored by females. Hoopaks and whippiks find the most use, so they are described here.

The hoopak (sling-staff) is the most common of kender tools. This S', ironwood staff has a short spike attached to its tip, which doubles as a spear or bo stick. The staff's other end is forked and (commonly) laced with gut. A stone may be flung by either planting the blade end of the hoopak in the earth and bending the staff back to sling the stone, or whirling the hoopak overhead as a traditional sling-staff. This tool acts like a bullroar when whirled in the air, creating a low thrumming sound. Its uses include:



- throwing as a spear,
- striking as a staff,
- shooting or slinging stones,
- prying with the blade,
- picking apples with the gut, and
- whirling as a bullroarer.

The whippik (whip-bow) is a thin wand of ironwood that holds a short length of looped catgut on its end. It looks much like a riding whip. The whippik is the most popular tool among female kender. Short darts may be fired from this whip bow. With additional lengths of gut and various hooks, grapples, and snares the whippik performs various functions:

- shooting darts,
- whipping or scourging enemies,
- snaring game,
- hanging criminals,
- fishing, and
- serving as a stringed instrument.

## Minotaurs ("Chosen Ones")

### appearance

These huge, bull-headed (literally) demihumans stand a hulking 7' tall. Their torsos and limbs are humanoid: rippling chests and muscular arms, legs, and hands. Their feet, however, end in cloven hooves. Their whole bodies are covered with a layer of short hair. This fur can range in color from a whitish blonde to glossy black. Most minotaurs, like most humans, have one color of fur. Only after they reach the age of 110 do they start to show signs of mottling. Minotaurs live up

to 150 years-longer than either the bovines or humans whose forms they share.

Minotaur horns grow to 24" long. These lengths are measured and cherished because minotaurs pride themselves on their horns. Horns symbolize a great and noble heritage that no other people of Krynn can claim. Minotaurs rigorously wax and polish their horns to make them shiny and strong. Criminals are punished and forever exiled from minotaur society by having their horns sawed off. Dehorned minotaurs have lost their pride and sullied their honor. Such creatures are no longer even considered minotaurs, but are mere beasts akin to humans. No minotaur in good standing would ever befriend one of these hornless and hapless creatures.

### **attitudes and lifestyles**

Minotaurs are an honor-bound race. They believe strongly in preserving their honor and emerging victorious in the struggle for dominance in Krynn. Their brutish visages belie the keen minds within; many are smarter than the average human.

Oddly, of all the many races of Krynn, minotaurs are most like a diminutive folk—the dwarves. Both races value honor, strength, family, hard work, and the superiority of their race.

**Honor:** Without honor, minotaurs feel they have no life. They live by a rigid code, developed over the years in response to many hardships. They allow no exceptions to the letter of the code. A minotaur abides by his word, no matter how painful the consequences might be. Only in cases where the security of the entire race hangs in the balance might a typical minotaur even consider breaking his word. Naturally, minotaurs do not lightly pledge such oaths.

Even the brigand minotaurs of Kothas and Mithas consider honor the highest virtue. Anyone who questions the honor of a minotaur, even an outlaw, has offered him a grievous insult—and is likely to be repaid with a gaffhook in the throat.

**Strength:** Minotaurs adhere strictly to the rule of might: Might makes right. They believe any problems they have can be solved with strength, cunning, and skill. The rule of might finds clear expression in the arena, where all minotaur legal cases are settled. If a defendant can remain alive in the arena against the champions of the minotaurs, he has proven himself innocent.

Minotaurs also believe very strongly in competition. Competition allows one to measure oneself against other minotaurs and against lesser beings.

**Family:** Families are the building blocks of minotaur society, especially on Taladas. There, family plays a much stronger role than anywhere else on Krynn. Without a line of parentage, an individual minotaur is cut off from the noble and glorious history of the species. Without a family, an individual has no source of honor and pride—the meat and drink of minotaur existence.

Each minotaur family represents the whole family of minotaurs throughout Krynn. Each family therefore safeguards the precious core of minotaur history and honor. Any just minotaur would die for his family, as for his nation.

**Superiority:** Originally descended from the high ogreish races of Taladas, minotaurs see themselves as the heirs apparent to the world of Krynn. The other races of the world are weak and riddled with dishonorable folk—a fallow field waiting to be cropped by Krynn's master race. The minotaurs will stop at nothing to conquer that which they believe to be

theirs. Minotaurs, like most other races, believe themselves to be the chosen of the gods.

On Ansalon, minotaurs live in a sea-based culture on the two islands of Mithas and Kothas. Built on the rule of might, these lands are led by an emperor in Nethosak, capital of Mithas. The emperor's advisors are the Supreme Circle, a body of the eight most vicious and powerful minotaurs in all the land. Each member of the Circle has won his or her post by personal combat in the circus. They each serve a life term, which they defend by combat. Life terms usually last five to six years.

Because Ansalonian minotaurs care little about architecture and aesthetics, their cities and towns are squalid. Most buildings are made of mud and rough planking. The streets between the buildings are dirt or gravel. Only the arena and circus have any grandeur about them, built of masoned granite and ringed with lofty seats. The rest of a town has only the taverns on each corner to commend it. (Minotaurs love strong drink and good fights.)

On Taladas, minotaur civilization is another matter altogether. It covers roughly one-fourth of the continent. The League of Minotaurs rules southern Hosk, enlisting the aid of other races in the area to create the marvels of a truly advanced civilization. The League may well be the most advanced civilization on all of Krynn. The League's power in Taladas only increases with each decade. Its Emperor, Ambeoutin XI (named after the famed deliverer of the Ansalonian minotaurs across the sea), wields absolute power.

### **history**

The violence of the minotaur race has its roots in their creation. Legends say the minotaurs were created when the Graystone escaped its bonds and spun crazily across the world. As it shrieked over villages of high ogre folk on the now-lost continent of Taladas, some people underwent a painful transformation. They awoke in the morning as minotaurs.

When these hapless man-beasts sought help from their ogreish brethren, they found enslavement instead. Eventually, the story goes, the minotaurs broke free, sailing crude ships to Ansalon to begin anew. However, they did not leave Taladas without exacting a price. They drenched the earth with the blood of ogres the night they left, devastating the lands and lives of their former masters.

The voyage to Ansalon was a fantastic one, in the exaggerated style that ancient tales often have. The minotaurs encountered fierce storms and vicious sea creatures. Fully one-quarter of their number were lost to the ocean. At long last, they reached the land of Ansalon. Abandoning their vessels on the beach, they began to build a new life for themselves.

Unfortunately, the new country did not improve their lot. Inward expansion of the minotaur colonies soon ran afoul of the Kal-Thax empire of dwarves. Like the ogres before them, the dwarves enslaved the man-beasts, becoming task masters rather than friends. Battalions of dwarves marched east toward the coastal towns of the minotaurs, slaughtering those who would not enter slavery peacefully.

For centuries, the minotaurs endured this brutal captivity. Resentment and hatred burned ever hotter in their breasts. The minotaur hero Ambeoutin began to circulate among his people in secret, mustering them to revolt. With the aid of a wizard and an artifact from the Ogre Wars, Ambeoutin led his

people in a revolt that overthrew the dwarves and destroyed their Empire.

And so, sometime around 1600 PC, every last dwarf in Kal-Thax died at the hands of the slaves. No word of the utter destruction of the dwarven civilization escaped until long after the minotaurs had returned to the coast. When dwarven explorers came searching for the ancient and abandoned city of Kal-Thax, they could not even find the gates, for ivy had engulfed them. To this day, Kal-Thax's disappearance remains a mystery to the dwarves of Ansalon.

Once back on the coast, the minotaurs established a kingdom of raiders and farmers, learning to wrest what they needed from the land and from others. They acclaimed Ambeoutin their king, and he founded their society upon honor. No minotaur would ever be enslaved again unless he broke his word or the minotaur code of honor. And because honor is strength, all questions of honor would be settled in the arena.

In time, Ambeoutin sired twin children. These two, Mithas and Kothas, learned of kingship and battle at their father's knee. When the time came for the arena battle to decide which would become ruler after their father, they proved to be so evenly matched that neither could gain victory over the other. Eventually, after a day and a night of fighting, the judges declared the match a draw. In 1560 PC, the minotaur kingdom of Ambeoutin was divided into two separate countries, each named after one of the twins.

These nations existed peacefully for 1500 years, learning the arts of seafaring and of agriculture. They became highly proficient in both, and their civilizations grew. The minotaurs created a code of laws to give flesh to Ambeoutin's skeletal decree that all must live by honor. Slowly minotaur culture began to approach the heights of its glory.

Again, though, they ran afoul of another realm. This time, the Istarian Empire in its heyday verged onto minotaur lands. The minotaurs were no match for the endless hordes of humans that overran them. Again, the minotaurs were bound in chains. These new oppressors were far worse taskmasters than the dwarves, because the Istarians believed themselves righteous in their acts. They considered minotaurs abominations of the gods' creatures. Thousands were hunted down and slain in the name of Good. Self-righteous and ruthless and cruel were the Istarians, so crushing that the minotaurs could never stage a successful rebellion.

The doom of Istar was the salvation of the minotaurs. When the fiery mountain of the Cataclysm struck down Istar, the minotaurs on the eastern coasts no longer faced slavers or bounty hunters. The gods even separated the two kingdoms of Mithas and Kothas from Ansalon, making them islands safe from the oppressors. Minotaurs perceived the Cataclysm as a sign from the gods of the minotaurs' future glory. Now, part of the minotaur code of honor is to fill Krynn with their folk, to flourish even amidst the annihilation of others.

### **Tools, Technology, and Weapons**

As a race built upon violence and brutality, minotaurs make excellent fighters. They are trained in the arenas from youth for strength, cunning, and intelligence. Common weapons include double-bladed battle axes, large flails, short swords, and whips. Those with great strength have even been known to wield two broad swords, one in each great fist. In addition to these common weapons, minotaurs have created and mas-

tered a variety of bizarre weapons for the arena.

Minotaur weapons are huge and heavy. Non-minotaurs must have exceptional strength even to heft them. Some examples are the sanguine, a 7' long gladiator weapon that has a serrated spearhead at each end, and a small buckler with a razor-edged crescent at its middle. In the hands of a master the sanguine can be used one-or two-handed to parry attacks, trip foes, fight multiple foes, or slash, bludgeon, or pierce foes. It cannot be thrown. The tessto is a 6'-long studded club with a loop of rope at its hilt. A cunning master can use the tessto defensively by spinning it around its center like a baton, and using its loop to snag feet, hands, and heads.

### **Minotaur armor**

Minotaur's thick hides grant them a natural protection from attack. Because they value bravery in battle, minotaurs rarely deign to wear armor more protective than leather. Nobles occasionally wear splint armor or breastplates fashioned of lizard hide or beetle carapace. Minotaur fighters almost always refuse to use shields, leaving their hands free to wield two-handed weapons.

### **Ogre Irda ("first-Born")**

#### **appearance**

Irda, the high ogres of Krynn, retain the beauty that ogres had at their creation. In their natural form, Irda stand about 6'tall and are slender. They possess a dark loveliness that accentuates their cold beauty. Their drawn faces are regal and statuesque. Beneath drooping eyelids, they have keen eyes of





silver. Their skin color ranges from midnight blue to deep, sea green. Most Irda have black hair, but some have tresses of white or silver. All keep their hair well-trimmed and combed.

Irda dress in simple clothing—linen smocks and milkweed-silk gowns, primarily. They adorn these elegant garments with jewelry: pearl brooches, simple bracelets, and thin necklaces of steel. They will not don garments made of wool, leather, or any product from animals, and they eat no meat.

Irda have deeply resonant voices, filled with rich melancholy. When they sing, audiences become immediately silent and listen tearfully.

All Irda move with an innate grace. Their steps seem to be part of a silent dance. Rarely do they back into corners or step off-balance. This fluidity of motion reflects the Irda's deep somatic awareness, which comes from their being *shape-changers*. After several years of practice, Irda can change at will in height (two feet in either direction) and appearance (the form of any human, demihuman, or humanoid race). Although each Irda has many faces, they typically perfect and use only two or three at a time. Over their 500-year lifespans, however, Irda assume many different forms.

The cousins of the Irda do not share their beauty. Evil **ogres** stand 9' tall and cover their gray, warty skin with loincloths and rags. Their faces are studies in brutality, depravity, and cunning cruelty. **Giant ogres** stand 24' tall—even kneeling, they rise above the heads of the other ogres. They have tusk-like teeth that protrude from their broad mouths and are generally smarter than regular ogres. **Ogre mages** stand 10' tall. They have lean bodies and share their cousins' look of bestial cruelty, though they appear much smarter. Finally (and rather abominably) come **half-ogres**, crossbreeds between evil ogres and humans. They resemble human throwbacks to the time of caves and clubs.

### attitudes and lifestyles

Irda have withdrawn from the world, for they feel it does not welcome them anymore. Although they harbor no animosity toward the current races of Krynn, they consider humans and demihumans fragile, flighty, and transient folk who are hopelessly enslaved by their emotions. Many living Irda remember the Cataclysm and its lessons, but most living humans and demihumans were not even born until two centuries after the Cataclysm. Understandably, Irda believe that the world belongs to alien folk now. However, those Irda who travel amidst the current folk of Krynn are often surprised by the rich variety and hearty nature of the people.

Although Irda harbor no animosity toward Krynn's other races, the feeling is not reciprocated. Humans still tell tales of the wicked and oppressive ogres who once enslaved them. These tales describe beasts who surpass even modern ogres in evil and depravity. Demihumans hate Irda because they share ogre blood. Other ogres hate Irda because they betrayed their evil natures. And every race distrusts Irda because of their shapechanging ability. Legends abound of Irda "child stealers," who assume the shape of a child's parent only to swallow him whole.

The absurdity of such stories does nothing to discount their effect in the minds of humans and demihumans. Some human prophecies even claim that Irda are harbingers of a second Cataclysm. Obviously, Irda shapeshifting skills come in handy for disguise when among the hostile folk of Ansalon. Even with their abilities, however, Irda are cautious and fearful.

Irda are completely undeserving of their reputation. Unlike their evil ogre kin, Irda have chosen the path of good. Because the gods of Evil sponsored them in creation, however, the Irda struggle with the vestiges of evil within them. Non-Irda often interpret this inner struggle as arrogance or antagonism. It is, in fact the opposite. Irda are peace-loving and gentle folk who retreat from combat and avoid offending others.

The royal line of the Irda stretches back unbroken to the Age of Dreams and Igraine himself. Irda pride themselves on their heritage and treat each other with respect and honor. A king or queen rules the island, and the court of nobility extends to even the most common of the Irda. This arrangement makes for happy citizens and stable monarchies.

Irda dwellings are as simple and elegant as their clothing. They do not build houses, but live in smooth, dry caves during inclement seasons and warm, lush valleys in the summer. They decorate their dwelling places with dried flowers and stalks and carefully avoid fouling their environments. Irda seek to live in harmony with nature, refusing to wear or eat any products derived from animals, whether or not removing the product caused pain.

Their island home itself, part of the Dragon Isle chain, is protected by various magics. One permanent spell upon the island makes it appear merely a flat stretch of open sea. Not even Irda can find the island except when the moon Solinari is in high sanction. Then, the homeland calls to them, directing their ships into harbor. If a ship does not reach the island before Solinari's high sanction ends, it often becomes hopelessly lost at sea.

Irda refer to their mystic book, the *Irdanaith*, in all matters of history and faith. Only Irda have even seen or held this book, and no non-Irda even knows of its existence. In addition to the *Irdanaith*, Irda have an extensive oral history.

### history

Elven bards say that elves were the first to waken upon Krynn. But elven bards lie. First awoke the ogres. They breathed in the primal dawn, bathing themselves in its virgin light. First to rise from the ground, ogres became the masters of creation. And they were beautiful. The *Irdanaith*, a mystical book known only to Irda, teaches the following truths of creation.

When the gods created Krynn, they formed creatures in their own image. The gods of Good created elves and taught them Goodness. The gods of Neutrality created beasts and taught them Neutrality. The gods of Evil created ogres—creatures of great beauty and strength—and taught them Evil. A fourth type of creature, the Maran humans, partook of none of these alignments. The High God fashioned them from the stars and gave them free will.

First, the ogres awoke. They rubbed the sand of endless sleep from their eyes and spread out across the continents. They chose mountain heights for their homes, lofty places from which their lords could survey the lands. The ogres thus became the lords of creation. The elves, second to awake, chose to live in the forests, for the folk were slender and tall like the gentle trees. They became *Silvanesti*. The animals awoke third and spread throughout the world. They became the creatures of every land. When at last the Maran rose from sleep, all the best lands were taken. They settled in what was left: barren plains, rugged mountains, icy glaciers, deserts wastes, and tossing seas. They became barbarians.

According to their evil natures, ogres established a realm of

tyranny. The strict laws of their land enriched and empowered their king and punished disobedience with death. Once the king gained absolute control over his folk, he sought for minions elsewhere to dominate. The elves and their goodness proved too repulsive to rule. The animals were too feral and stupid to know they were being ruled. But the Marans—short-lived and shallow-brained—could make excellent slaves. Seeing this, the ogres hunted down the barbarian humans, catching them in broad nets. Thus, the humans became slaves in ogre mines.

Squalid and weak though they were, the humans had one great advantage over the ogres: free will. One day, a mine collapsed, killing many slaves and trapping Everlyn, the beautiful daughter of the ogre overlord Igraine. Igraine ordered the slaves out of the caves, anxious not to lose any more of his property.

A slave named Eadamm refused the order, and instead led other slaves to rescue Igraine's daughter. When Eadamm emerged with Everlyn, Igraine knew he must by law kill Eadamm for his disobedience. But Igraine admired the slave's choice, and learned in that day of free will.

Instead of sentencing Eadamm to immediate death, Igraine fulfilled the letter of the law by sentencing the human to "death at my whim." Thus, Eadamm could continue to live, for Igraine never developed the whim that would call for the execution to be carried out. Eadamm, grateful for his reprieve, marshalled the slaves to double their output for Igraine.

Igraine soon became richest and most powerful ogre in the region. By allowing his slaves even more freedom, he doubled their output again. But given some freedom, humans always want more. This love of, and demand for, freedom spread through the ranks of human slaves until revolts broke out all across the nation.

Seeing this, the other ogres quickly realized the danger of Igraine's leniency. "Igraine's Heresy" they called it—a weakness that would lead the ogre state into destruction and degeneracy. Igraine pleaded his case before the Grand Council, but the rulers labeled him insane. He barely escaped with his life. Before fleeing the city, Igraine struck the chains of all his slaves and pronounced them free. He also encouraged all of his friends and family (who had learned to share his lenient views) to do the same. Eadamm then led a slave revolt that decimated the ogre forces. Thus, the Ogre Wars of the Age of Dreams began.

Eadamm led his folk into the wilderness, where they harried ogre civilization for 6 years. At last, the ogres captured the rebel. They hamstrung him and paraded him about for 6 days, one day for each of the years he evaded their forces. Then, before a packed coliseum, the ogres drew and quartered him.

The crowd consisted almost entirely of slaves, who were brought to witness Eadamm's death as warning against further rebellions. The slaves did not take the message to heart. They rebelled, massacring every last ogre in the coliseum.

Meanwhile, Igraine and his followers fled to safety. They reached an isle north of Ansalon and there set up a homeland. In time, the evil ogres who were left behind grew misshapen and horrible, their appearance matching the corruption in their hearts. Their intellects and charms vanished also. They became stupid brutes, with only their vestigial cunning to testify to their former power.

Meanwhile, the Irda (as Igraine's folk called themselves) re-

mained hidden away from the world. The evil ogres never ceased to look for their traitorous brothers. Takhisis herself hunted them in rage for betraying her worship. Even the men who had been freed by Igraine forgot his role in their liberation. The humans cast themselves as the sole leaders of the rebellion, and included the Irda with the rest of the ogre oppressors. Friendless and hopeless in the world, the Irda resigned themselves to their inevitable deaths.

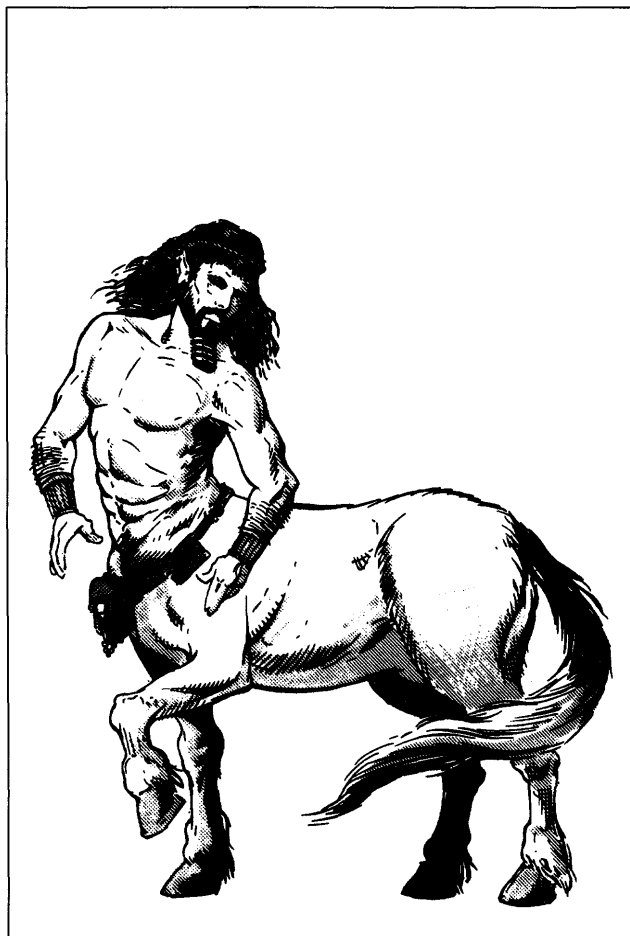
Mishakal, the Healing Hand, saw the plight of the Irda folk. As they slept one night, her healing hand passed through them, granting their bodies the power to change. She blessed the Irda with the power to take the form of any humanoid creature of Krynn, becoming one with their enemies. This talent saved the Irda time and again as they harbored away from the hostile world.

However, Irda isolation did come to an end. The Cataclysm revealed to Takhisis where her rebels dwelt. She mustered her armies and, in the War of the Lance, sent a huge force to eradicate her former servants. The Irda, who had been studying magic for millennia, staved off annihilation. However, Takhisis enslaved many Irda and took them to the mainland. Now, the remaining Irda tentatively seek ties with the folk of Ansalon to find and free their enslaved companions.

### Tools, Technology, and Weapons

The Irda are not a technologically-oriented race. Their most common weapons are **vine bolas** with hook-shaped stones, **cluster balls** of clay imbedded with poison thorns, and **powder bombs** created from hollowed eggs.

However, Irda use these weapons only when in a tight



spot. They prefer to rely upon their innate shapechanging ability and their propensity for magic. Their research into magic is unparalleled, making even the knowledge contained in the Towers of High Sorcery seem minuscule by comparison. Almost every Irda studies magic. They wield it naturally. Unlike most races, who must immerse themselves to the exclusion of all else in order to grasp magic's complex principles, Irda often develop proficiency in other disciplines as well. They consider magic the best of tools.

## Children of Krynn

The children of Krynn are beautiful creatures of nature—centaurs, griffins, nagas, pegasi, and satyrs. They are closest to the heart of Chislev. They are more intelligent than beasts, but less civilized than the major races just profiled.

### CentAurs

**Appearance:** Centaurs look like beautiful humans whose upper torsoes have been grafted onto the sleek, powerful bodies of horses. They have two human arms, and four equine legs.

Abanasinian centaurs, the biggest and handsomest, are strong and sturdy. Crystalmir centaurs are leaner, sleeker creatures, but still exhibit the renowned strength of their race. They tend to be shy and reclusive. Endscape centaurs have long, shaggy coats and are nomadic and savage. These short, stocky beasts are skilled with weaponry and combat, often attacking with their hooves as well. The last group, Wendle centaurs, are odd, pony-sized beasts. Their ribs form a set of bony plates that protect them in battle. Wendle centaurs are the smartest of all centaurs.

**Personality:** Centaurs are not especially intelligent, nor particularly virtuous, but most are gentle. They have a selfish bent and enjoy pleasures such as wine, art, and fine weather.

Although the centaurs of Krynn live in secluded woods and pasture lands, they freely associate with humans and demihumans, whom they consider less fortunate due to their dearth of legs. However, centaurs (especially those from Wendle) avoid kender, who often try to ride them.

### Griffins

**Appearance:** These violent avians are a bane to small human and demihuman settlements. Griffins are ferocious carnivores, half-lion and half-eagle. They are solitary in the way of all raptors: rarely will more than a dozen be found together. They prefer to lair in forests where trees offer perches and cover. Griffins are prized as mounts throughout Krynn. The elven Wildrunners are famed for their griffin cavalry. Trainers who acquire young griffins or unhatched eggs command high prices.

**Personality:** Griffins enjoy the taste of horseflesh. They search for poorly-defended farms. Even if a horse has a rider, a griffin rarely can resist trying for a taste. Griffins use their weight and speed to great effect against ground targets, and are even more fierce in aerial combat. They always fight to the death.

### Nagas

**Appearance:** Nagas are snakelike, magic-wielding creatures with humanoid heads. Nagas come in three varieties. Guard-

ian nagas, who reach lengths of 20 feet, often protect nearby human settlements from the threat of draconians and other creatures. Spirit nagas, somewhat shorter than guardians, prey upon merchants, small groups of adventurers, and ill-defended farmers. Water nagas, half the size of guardians, can be unpredictable, vacillating between Evil and Good. Some scholars believe that the three types of nagas are not related at all—they are merely different creatures of similar appearance.

**Personality:** Nagas possess high intelligence and magical abilities. They prefer to set traps for trespassers, relying mostly on magical ability rather than skill in combat. If opposition still exists after their magic is expended, they bite to defend themselves, trusting in their poison to finish off the opponent. Good-aligned guardian nagas, if they must attack people, use deadly poison. They can call on the same spells that clerics of the true gods use. Evil-intentioned spirit nagas can charm their foes, cast wizardly spells, or call on the evil gods for assistance. Neutral-aligned water nagas try to avoid combat, but cast wizardly spells when they must defend themselves.

### Pegasi

**Appearance:** The winged horses of Ansalon are among the best-loved children of Krynn. Their broad-muscled backs can bear two to three riders, their satiny pelts are smooth to the touch, and the feral beauty of their eyes captivates humans and demihumans alike. Their fur is usually white, though some are brown or (rarely) black.

**Personality:** Although pegasi serve Good and are prized as mounts, they are not easily tamed. The wild nature and intelligence of the pegasi makes them unwilling to be bridled. When angered, pegasi attack with their hooves and teeth. Pegasi also make excellent aerial combatants, as they can make diving attacks from a height of 50' or more.

The great steeds' natural enemies are griffins, who of course, think of them as mere horses, and therefore food.

### SaTyrs

**Appearance:** These natural folk appear to be a cross between humans and goats. They have cloven hooves for feet; goatlike legs; a human torso, arms, and head; and goat ears and horns. A satyr's skin ranges from tan to light brown. Occasionally, some have red overtones. Hair color is medium brown, reddish, or black. Satyrs dwell in woodlands across Ansalon. All satyrs are male.

**Personality:** Pleasure-loving satyrs are wild, carefree, and unpredictable. Although not malicious, satyrs are viewed with suspicion by the humans of Krynn, who fear the goat-men might steal their women. Despite such ludicrous claims, satyrs are relatively inoffensive. They want only to enjoy life, and therefore are fond of females of many races. Scholars believe dryads are the female counterparts to satyrs.

## Knights of Solamnia

Before the Cataclysm, the Knights of Solamnia were the greatest order of chivalry in Ansalon. Between the Cataclysm and the War of the Lance, the knights became reviled and scorned by the people for their inability or unwillingness to combat the Cataclysm. Since the War of the Lance, the Solamnic Knights have regained-or begun to regain-their former status. They seek to revive their code of honor and apply it to the new Ansalon.

### Origin and history

The Knights of Solamnia arose in the Age of Light, about three millennia before the War of the Lance. The order was founded by the commander of the Ergothian Palace Guard, Vinas Solamnus. Sent by his Emperor to quell a rebellion in northeastern Ergoth, Vinas saw instead that the rebellion was justified.

Solamnus assembled his legion. In an impassioned speech now lost to history, he detailed the imperial atrocities and announced his plans to champion the people's cause. In addition, he promised any soldier loyal to Ergoth safe passage back to the capital. But the warriors were moved by the people's plight and, risking exile or even death, most chose to stay.

In the midst of a fierce winter, Solamnus mustered his knights and the local frontier nobles. The rebel army doggedly pushed the Imperial legions back to the very gates of Daltigoth and laid siege to the city.

In two months, the city fell—a revolt among the citizens of Daltigoth forced the Emperor to sue for peace. Thus, it was not armies but common folk who brought independence to northeast Ergoth. The people from Hylo to the Khalkist Mountains chose Solamnus as King, naming the country Solamnia in his honor. Though the nation did not become a great power during that Age, the name Solamnia became synonymous with honesty, integrity, and determination.

In 2225 PC, the Lords of the Northern Reaches sought King Vinas' help. They, too, had thrown off the Ergothian tyranny and they wished to unite with Solamnia. Though Vinas wanted to comply, he saw the task as impossible: the ideals and customs of the nations differed markedly or even conflicted. How could there be peace in their union? King Vinas therefore launched a Quest of Honor to find an answer to this problem. He left his most trusted lieutenants in charge and journeyed into the wilderness.

After many weeks of travel and hardship, Solamnus sailed to Sancrist Isle. In time, he found a glade where a huge stone of black granite lay. There he fasted and prayed to the gods of Good. They instructed King Vinas to create a knighthood with three separate orders, each upholding a single ideal given by one of the gods.

The gods then transformed the stone where Solamnus prayed into a pillar of white crystal. This pillar blessed and sanctified the glade, sealing the gods' pact to watch over the orders of knighthood. Solamnus returned and established the three orders of the Knights of Solamnia: the Orders of the Crown, the Sword, and the Rose.

**Knights of legend:** Vinas himself became the most famous Solamnic Knight, though two of his contemporaries also became legends: Bedal Brightblade and Huma Dragonbane.

Bedal Brightblade single-handedly held a pass into Solamnia against hordes of desert nomads. His sword Brightblade was of dwarven make, never rusting or losing its edge despite heavy use. The tomb of Bedal lies buried in the southern arm

of the Khalkist Mountains, its location all but lost. Legend states Bedal will return to aid Solamnia in its darkest hour. Sturm Brightblade, Hero of the Lance, is a distant descendant of Bedal.

Only one Solamnic Knight ever exceeded Vinas in virtue: Huma Dragonbane. In the Third Dragon War, he led a group of heroes to destroy the evil dragons and drive them from Solamnia. Huma's greatest ally was a silver dragon who, in her human form, had fallen tragically in love with the knight. During their battle with Takhisis, Huma sustained a mortal wound. To this day, many Solamnians claim that thunderstorms mark the gods' mourning for Huma.

Huma was reverently buried in a tomb shaped like a silver dragon. But as the world darkened, the path to the tomb became rough and overgrown. Soon, folk questioned whether Huma had truly lived, or was only a legend.

During the War of the Lance, a band of heroes found Huma's tomb. There they also discovered the special metal used to make dragonlances. Wanting to finally establish the truth of the Huma legends, the heroes opened the tomb. It was empty. The discovery of Huma's tomb had only deepened the mystery.

**Fallen Heroes:** The Cataclysm sundered people's faith in the knights. Solamnia, though spared the worst disasters, was overrun by evil creatures. Many knights died fighting these gruesome horrors. Rumors purported that the knights knew of the Cataclysm in advance and refused to avert it. There was a kernel of truth to these accusations. One knight had known.

Lord Soth, a Knight of the Rose who ruled Dargaard Keep, had known of the disaster and chose not to avert it. Soth's story is outlined in Solamnia's geographic entry; suffice it to say here that his foul deeds blighted the name of the knighthood. Soon, the Oath and the Measure were publicly jeered. Words escalated into violence. Knights were foully murdered; their castles and homes were invaded and seized; their families were slaughtered or driven into exile.

Centuries of heroism fell to years of panicked hatred. The Solamnic Knights faded from view. Some forsook the road of honor and took up the simple tools of laborers. Others roamed the countryside under false names, continuing to fight evil. Others still, who could not bear to work in secret, left Solamnia and settled on Sancrist. To this day, a settlement of knights thrives there.

### The Organization of The Knighthood

The ancient organization of Solamnic Knights has withstood great upheavals in its 2,500-year reign. The most profound tribulations occurred after the Cataclysm, when many circles of knighthood dwindled or disappeared and the Great Circle—the oldest established body—moved from Vingaard Keep to Whitestone Glade on the Isle of Sancrist.

Since the Cataclysm, there has been no Grand Master knight. So too, do the positions of High Knight in each order remain vacant. To fill these positions, the knighthood needs to order a Grand Circle of Knights. Sadly, only 63 knights of various orders are known to remain—not enough to make a quorum. Knights are, however, presently emerging across the continent's face and slowly refilling the ranks. Perhaps a new ruling council can be elected soon.

The position of Grand Master must be filled by a High Knight—the High Warrior, High Clerist, or High Justice. Once





elected, the Lord of Knights serves for life. The Lord of Knights commands the High Knights, who in turn command their respective orders of knighthood. All three High Knights and the Grand Master must be present for a Knightly Council, which makes all the decisions for the knighthood.

The High Warrior rules the Order of the Crown, the High Clerist rules the Order of the Sword, and the High Justice rules the Order of the Rose. Each order chooses its own leader by nomination and election, independent of the others.

Each order contains numerous geographical circles of knighthood. The troubles after the Cataclysm reduced many circles to covert cells. These cells exist throughout Ansalon, in major cities and towns where knights are despised, distrusted, or even banned outright. Cities such as Nordmaar, Tarsis, and any Dragonarmy-occupied town contain covert cells. Most knights dislike the secrecy, but they endure it for sake of the Oath and the Measure. Some maintain communication with the Grand Circle in Sancrist, but many are isolated. All such cells adhere to the Oath, slaying evil and giving aid when needed.

In other cities, knights are welcome-for the citizens know of Solamnic heroics in the War of the Lance. Here circles exist openly and are easy to find. Sancrist and the cities of Solamnia contain numerous circles.

#### **Motto and Laws**

For over 15 centuries, the knights have lived by two codes: the Oath and the Measure. The Oath is simply "Est Sularus oth Mithas," which means "My Honor is My Life."

Obedience to the spirit of these laws is the chief goal of

knighthood. During the War of the Lance, the Solamnic Knights forgot the spirit of the Measure and clung to the unfeeling letter of the law. In time and at great cost, the knights learned that honor lies in the heart of each knight, not in a set of dusty books.

A summary of the Measure for each order follows.

#### ***The Measure of Knights of The Crown***

Loyalty and obedience epitomize the Knights of the Crown.

Loyalty is unquestioning faithfulness to the cause of a higher power. Knights of the Crown view loyalty as a tribute to be justly and voluntarily rendered. The Order of the Crown renders loyalty to the order's founding god Habbakuk, to those who suffer under evil's weight, and to rulers who, by decree of the Knightly Council, deserve the knights' protection. The list of approved rulers is called the List of Loyalty.

Obedience is the practical manifestation of loyalty. A Knight of the Crown unquestioningly obeys those on the List.

The specific responsibilities of a Knight of the Crown include tithing income, aiding any knight who requires help, and service to the nations on the List of Loyalty.

#### ***The Measure of Knights of The Sword***

Knights of the Sword act as warriors for the gods of good, upholding the purest ideals of heroism and courage.

Heroism is the self-sacrificial fight for the cause of Good. Heroic deeds include strengthening the weak, enriching the poor, freeing the enslaved, exonerating the falsely accused, championing the defenseless, and aiding fellow knights in need.

Courage is the readiness to die honorably in the fight for Good. Courageous acts include facing evil fearlessly, defending the honor of the knighthood, defending the honor of a fellow knight, and protecting the defenseless and weak.

A Knight of the Sword must surrender all personal wealth to the knightly coffers (save what is needed for upkeep), pay homage to Kiri-Jolith and the gods of good each day, eagerly engage evil opponents in combat (not retreating regardless of the enemy's strength), protect the weak and defenseless, and forswear use of knightly powers for unrighteous reasons.

#### ***The Measure of knights of The Rose***

The Order of the Rose embraces honor guided by justice and wisdom.

Honor is the allegiance to one's Oath to defend the cause of good. Honorable deeds include sacrificing oneself for the sake of others, refusing to surrender to or ally with an evil foe, defending the knighthood to the death, protecting the lives of fellow knights, and living true to the Oath in all matters.

Justice is the heart of the Measure and the soul of a Rose Knight: to render to everyone-creature, person, or god-his or her due. Just acts include aiding those who are less fortunate, donating all wealth to the knightly coffers (except what is needed for personal or parochial upkeep), worshipping and obeying Paladine and the gods of Good, fighting injustice with courage and commitment, and seeing that no life is wasted or sacrificed in vain.

Wisdom is the prudent use of one's abilities and resources to uphold honor and render justice.







## Becoming a knight of Solamnia

**Becoming a Crown Knight:** All who wish to become Solamnic Knights must first enter the knighthood as squires of the Knights of the Crown, regardless of which order the knight intends to eventually join.

Because their order is the easiest to follow, Knights of the Crown advance more quickly than other knights.

**Becoming a Sword Knight:** Upon completing duties as a Squire of the Crown, a knight may continue in that order or apply to the Order of the Sword. Each candidate for the Order of the Sword must complete a quest that promotes the cause of the order. The quest must be a witnessed (or otherwise verifiable) deed of heroism that exemplifies knightly honor and goodness. The quest must include a 30-day and 500 mile journey, the restoration of something that was lost, single combat with an evil and equally matched opponent, and three tests of wisdom, one of generosity, and one of compassion.

After the quest is completed, the knight appears before a Knightly Council, telling of the quest and presenting evidence. If the presiding High Clerist finds the tale and deed acceptable, the candidate takes the Oath.

Knights of the Sword honor the True Gods, learning clerical disciplines. Through these disciplines, Knights of the Sword receive from the gods magical healing abilities, limited foresight, and prophecy. Before the Cataclysm, these special abilities made Sword Knights a welcome sight. Now, the knights' powers may be considered sorcery in some areas, and punished by death.

Knights of the Sword gain clerical spells by spending a holy day in fasting and prayer. When a knight joins the order, he selects a holy day, designating it for worship and meditation. During devotions on that day, the knight asks his god to grant him the ability to do miracles in his name.

During the holy day, the knight cannot do battle, earn profit, or speak harshly to anyone. The knight cannot travel unless in silence, and must spend three hours in solitude and meditation. The books of the Measure claim that no beast will attack a Sword Knight on a holy day as long as the knight remains true.

**Becoming a Rose Knight:** When a Sword Knight's initial training is complete, he may choose to either remain a Sword Knight or apply to the Order of the Rose. To join the order, the Knight must tell the tale of his family and lineage, as well as his deeds of honor. Afterward, the Council meets in private and determines whether to accept or reject the petition.

Before the Cataclysm, only Sword Knights of royal blood could become Rose Knights. Now in post-Cataclysmic times, the bloodline stipulation has fallen into disuse, for a number of reasons: the Cataclysm destroyed records and muddled bloodlines, marriages and dalliances between noble and common folk confused lineages, and courage and honor proved more crucial to the knighthood than royal blood.

A candidate who passes these examinations is assigned a quest to prove loyalty to the order and its cause. The quest must include a 30-day and 500-mile journey, the restoration of something that was lost, defeat of an evil and more powerful opponent, and one test of wisdom, three of generosity, and three of compassion. The completion of these tasks must be witnessed or evidenced. A candidate who returns is judged before a council of the Order of the Rose. If the quest and candidate are found fitting, the person becomes a Knight of the Rose.

## Wizards of high Sorcery

**Origins:** In the Age of Dreams, before the stars were firmly fixed in the heavens, the gods of magic walked the face of Krynn. Solinari, Lunitari, and Nuitari were their names. They each held a love for magic, for the new world of Krynn, and for the spirit-beings called stars.

This third love was echoed by all the gods, and it led to the All-Saints' War. The three gods of magic did not join in the battles of that war, choosing instead to orbit the planet as its moons. But their eyes and hearts were ever attentive to the fate of the stars. During the long war, each god took occasion to walk Ansalon in search of one mortal follower. They each found such a creature and bestowed on it the keys to the Lost Citadel—an amazing place of magic beyond the circles of the universe. Taking their disciples to the Lost Citadel, the gods taught them the three Foundations of Wizardry:

- 1) All wizards are brothers in their order. All orders are brothers in the power.
- 2) The places of High Wizardry are held in common among all the orders and no sorcery is to be used there in anger against fellow wizards.
- 3) The world beyond the walls of the towers may bring brother against brother and order against order, but such is the way of the universe.

Returning their apprentices to Krynn, the gods of magic established the three Orders of High Sorcery. Solinari, god of Good magic, founded the Order of the White Robes; Lunitari, god of Neutral magic, founded the Order of the Red Robes; and Nuitari, god of Evil magic, founded the Order of the Black Robes. Initially, the Orders of Sorcery were loosely



knit groups of wizards. As war with the dragons grew inevitable, the Masters of each order assembled at the Lost Citadel to proclaim the unity of the orders.

Since that time, all Wizards of High Sorcery vow their first loyalty to magic and its continued existence on Ansalon. This loyalty lets magic flourish, despite attempts to eliminate it. After this primary loyalty, wizards have loyalty to their orders. A White Robe and a Black Robe wizard, fighting in opposing armies, would do everything necessary to destroy each other. If the wizards met on neutral ground, however, they would most likely compare notes and discuss magical matters. If an outside force were threatening the destruction of magic, the wizards would band together to stop it.

### **The Mechanics of Spellcasting**

On Krynn, magic is both an art and a power. People who study magic generally devote a large chunk of their lives to it, because the ancient languages and arcane symbols are complex and difficult to grasp. Certain races, like elves and irda, find the magic arts a natural fit to their ways of seeing the world. Other races, like dwarves, contemplate magic with deep distrust.

Spells may involve words, gestures, physical components, or combinations of the three. Most wizards spend a great deal of time collecting and preparing the components of their magic. They have pantries full of herbs and simples, and multitudinous pouches or pockets in their robes to carry individual ingredients safely. Like a signature perfume, a wizard's garments absorb the aromas of his favorite components to a degree that can never be completely scrubbed out.

The most difficult aspect of magic is memory. Unlike a bard reciting a ballad, a wizard on Krynn cannot simply repeat a spell until he knows it by rote. The essence of magic is a fluid power that eludes simple memorization. The very act of casting a spell in effect wipes it from the mage's mind.

For this reason, all wizards keep spellbooks. They record spells they learn in these volumes, so that they can go back to their notes and restudy; and relearn. When a spell is not successful, a mage can review his processes, and attempt to correct his faults. Wizards guard their spellbooks with their lives. If a mage loses his book, he loses those spells inscribed within it, possibly forever.

### **Moons and Magic**

Each of the three Orders of High Sorcery receives its powers from one of the three magic moons that appear in the sky above Krynn. Wizards of the White Robes gain power from Solinari, Red Robes from Lunitari, and Black Robes from Nuitari.

The phase and alignment of a specific moon affects the power level of a given order. For example, Lunitari in low sanction (new moon) weakens Red Robes, but does not affect the other two orders. The Night of the Eye, when all three moons line up in front-to-back order (Nuitari, Lunitari, and Solinari) at high sanction (full moon), resembles a huge white eye with a black pupil and a red iris. It is a terrifying sight. Most nonspellcasting folk fear this night, for it sets all magic at its peak.

The largest and farthest moon, Solinari, completes its phases or sanctions in 36 days. Lunitari's cycle takes 28 days. The smallest and nearest moon, Nuitari's cycle takes only 8 days.

### **Towers of High Sorcery**

In pre-Cataclysm days, five towers served as common ground for the Orders of High Sorcery. These towers stood in the locations eventually known as Palanthus, Wayreth, Istar, Daltigoth, and the Ruins.

The general plan for the towers' construction was decided by a committee of members from all three orders. They designed a central complex with a tower surrounded by a field or garden. The actual construction, however, was overseen by the wizards living in each area. Thus, despite the standardized design, each tower reflects the tastes of its own region.

In addition to differing decorations, each tower has a unique magical field to protect it from attack. The Tower of Wayreth is surrounded by a transdimensional field, which allows it to appear anywhere within 500 miles of its original location in Wayreth Forest. The Tower in Palanthus is surrounded by the Shoikan Grove, which emanates a powerful *fear* spell. These two towers are the most popular, most well-known of the five.

Details about the other three towers are sketchy, thanks in part to the Cataclysm. Apparently the garden around Daltigoth once caused *sleep*, that around Istar made attackers *forget*, and that around the Ruins created intense feelings of passion. In addition, a series of unique wards and obstacles created a first line of defense for these towers.

All the towers are neutral zones. Fighting among wizards at the towers is forbidden, punishable by immediate death.

### **Organization**

The Orders of High Sorcery are ruled by a representative council called the Conclave of Wizards. Seven archmages of each order serve as a delegation to the Conclave of Wizards. The Conclave convenes in accordance with the moon cycles to discuss routine as well as urgent issues.

One of the seven delegates from each order serves as the order's Master. The means of selecting the Master differ from order to order: white Robes hold an election; Red Robes draw lots from the seven Conclave members; Black Robes hold contests to prove magical prowess and domination. Once a Master is chosen, she or he serves for life unless convicted of a serious breach of loyalty by unanimous vote of that order's delegation.

The Master of the Conclave, the highest official in the Order of High Sorcery, is elected from the twenty-one Conclave delegates. This election takes place through a consensus spell, which instantaneously gauges the collective will of Krynn's wizards on a specific topic. Wizards delight in the use of magic, and the spell prevents obstructive politicking.

### **Early Life of a Wizard and The Test of High Sorcery**

All who wish to join an Order of Wizardry begin their training as children, studying under an archmage, usually an archmage approved by the Conclave of Wizards. It is not, however, necessary to join an order to practice magic. Low-level wizards can dabble in magic without declaring an alignment or loyalty to the Conclave. Such minor magics are not even affected by the flux of the moons.

With greater power, however, comes greater responsibility. Those who seek to progress beyond the fundamentals of magic must travel to the Tower of Wayreth. There, the young



wizard declares an alignment and pledges loyalty to an Order of High Sorcery. The applicant is apprenticed to a higher level wizard, often the original mentor.

Once this is accomplished, the apprentice must take the Test of High Sorcery. The Test of High Sorcery measures a wizard's magical abilities and tells how the applicant will use current and future abilities. Each initiate's test differs. It is designed exclusively for him by the Conclave to measure his particular strengths and weaknesses. In all tests, failure means death. The wizards are less interested in the applicant's alignment than whether or not he will use the power of magic in a responsible manner.

In all versions of the Test, the applicant faces three trials of magic knowledge and use. These trials include the casting of all spells the initiate knows. In addition, the Test includes three trials that cannot be solved by magic alone. One such trial involves combat against an ally; another includes solo combat against a far more powerful opponent. The third trial is always a mystery. Those attempting the Test may bring companions along, but occasionally these folk do not return.

A wizard may change Orders after taking the Test. But he suffers some loss of power and focus at the time of his transition. Study in the new direction he has chosen eventually makes up this loss.

### *Wizards of The White Robes*

A White Robe Wizard acts to promote good. Aside from his vow to support magic, the cause of good is his central concern. Acts that violate these moral, ethical and spiritual precepts lead to the sorcerer's ruin. White Robe Wizards who stray from the path soon find they are unaffected by Solinari.

White Robe Wizards often assist quests and causes in the name of good, finding themselves allied with paladins, clerics of Paladine, Mishakal and the other good gods, and Knights of Solamnia.

### *Wizards of The Red Robes*

Wizards of the Red Robes tread the delicate path of neutrality. Besides an ultimate loyalty to magic, a Red Robe Wizard works to balance good and evil. Wizards of the Red Robes often act as the moderating voice of reason and peace when conflict arises. While the forces of good and evil battle for complete control of Krynn, the forces of neutrality seek only to maintain the world's diversity and the freedom of choice. While a wholly evil world is clearly unacceptable, the Red Robes point to Istar's final edicts as a demonstration of the similar dangers of unchecked "good."

### *Wizards of The Black Robes*

Wizards of the Black Robes embrace the cause of evil. They do not, however, hurl random fireballs at peasants' cottages, for such activities would abuse and jeopardize their chief love-magic. Black Robe Wizards may be cruel, but they are selfish and cunning also, avoiding open acts of violence if a more subtle way can be found.

### *Renegades*

Accomplished wizards who live outside the strictures of the Towers of Sorcery are known as renegade wizards. Again, the dabbler who delights in colored fireballs and phantasms for



children's parties is not a concern to the Conclave. But some sorcerers of considerable power and learning ignore the brotherhood fostered by the gods of magic. They may pursue a solitary study in some arcane area of research, or they may foment grandiose schemes of conquest. Whatever the case, these individuals are known as renegade wizards.

A renegade wizard who has come to the attention of the Orders is seen as a threat which must be absorbed, neutralized, or eliminated. Each Order has its own way of dealing with a renegade.

White Robe wizards capture the renegade using as little violence as possible. The renegade is informed that he must go before the Conclave and join an Order of High Sorcery. If the renegade refuses, he is magically cast out of Krynn. If the White Robes fail to capture the renegade, they keep tabs on his location, destroying him only if the renegade proves to be a menace to the ways of magic or to innocents.

Red Robe wizards attempt to capture the renegade with as much force as deemed necessary, usually increasing in proportion to the renegade's resistance. The renegade is brought before the Conclave and asked to join an Order of High Sorcery. Should the renegade refuse, or if the Red Robes fail in their attempt to capture him, the Red Robes hunt down and destroy the renegade, citing him to be a threat to the balance.

Black Robe wizards attempt to capture the renegade and try to win him over directly to the Black Robe Order. Should he refuse, the renegade is persuaded to remain renegade—or killed.







# Realms above: gods of Krynn

Krynn's pantheon of 21 true gods comprises beings of awesome power, beauty, and will. The triadic balance of the world—Good, Neutrality, and Evil—reflects the divisions and the proportions of the heavenly factions. The true gods have battled for dominion over Krynn since the world began. But these immortal wars have spilled mostly mortal blood, as they are fought by worshippers and minions on the earthly battlefields of Krynn.

## Mortals and The gods

The first celestial war was fought for the hearts and souls of the newly created mortals on Krynn. Theologians know it as the All Saints War. The gods of Good wanted to instruct mortals in the ways of goodness; the gods of Evil wished to subjugate mortals; and the gods of Neutrality desired to give mortals free will to choose their futures and suffer their own consequences. In addition, every family of gods needed the worship of mortal races to empower them.

These motivations remain true to this day. The gods therefore reward mortals who have served them well—both in this life and the life to come. As well as granting miracles (or spells) and visions to priests, gods bless their faithful in the afterlife and grant boons to their descendants.

Only tremendously significant events, which affect entire populations and the lands they dwell in, bring a god to walk among mortals in avatar form. Problems like the War of the Lance and the restoration attempt of the Silvanesti homeland are two such examples. Even then, a god comes only to someone who has been faithful in following the god's tenets.

## The death and Rebirth of faith

The Cataclysm profoundly affected not only Krynn's physical world, but the religious faith of all its peoples as well. Catastrophe often calls faith into question: what kind of gods would visit so much destruction on their followers? The earthquakes, storms and other natural disasters Ansalon experienced tested the strength and fortitude of all peoples to the limit.

But worse still was the loss of faith. At the time of the Cataclysm, evil rolled unchecked across the land. Clerics of the good and neutral gods vanished. When believers called for miracles and blessings, they received no answer.

It seemed to the peoples of Ansalon that the gods had abandoned them in their greatest hour of need. So the people abandoned the gods.

In the three hundred years since the Cataclysm, false gods were proposed, and forms of worship devised for them. But many people abandoned faith in any guise. The ceremonies of worship and supplication were forgotten, or worse, jeered. The gods, like dragons and faeries, were relegated to the realm of children's stories, and miracles could be explained away as slight of hand and chicanery.

In this environment, faith—true faith—is a rare, new, wondrous thing. The miracles clerics can now perform with their gods' blessings attract awe and astonishment from the common people. Interest in all the true gods is on the upsurge.

## Descriptions of The True gods

After a description of each deity appears a description of the god's avatar. An avatar is a physical projection of a god on the face of Krynn. These corporeal shadows have much less power than the god that casts them and, unlike the god, they can be killed. Remember, the avatar and the actual god are as different as a man and his shadow.

### high god, all-father/Mother (greater god)

The songs of creation tell of the One, the High God, who came from beyond. The High God came when all was void, when there was neither Krynn nor sun, moons nor stars. Then it was that the High God stepped through a door from distant worlds. Being alone in this new place, the High God chose to make other, weaker gods. As to how these gods were made, none knows for certain. Some songs relate that the High God opened a door in her heart to release the gods from beyond. Others say the High God brought crude gods with him through the door and fashioned them like a man whittling wood. Still others hold that the gods arose from the High God's passions—love, hatred, joy, fear, contentment, rage, and so forth. All stories agree, though, that the High God is mother and father to the other gods.

At the University at Palanthus, translations of the recently discovered Disks of Mishakal indicate that the High God was chief architect of Krynn. Staring into the void, the High God envisioned a fair and beautiful world—not a wholly good world, but a beautiful world all the same. Then, gathering the company of gods, the High God set them to work in forming all things. Reorx forged the great, spinning sphere while the other gods crafted the world's marvelous intricacies, all according to the High God's plan.

With the world's completion, the High God was weary. Withdrawing from Krynn, the High God set creation into the charge of three other gods—Paladine of Good, Takhisis of Evil, and Gilean of Neutrality. Still the High God watches these three pillars of creation, content to remain withdrawn.

Most tales agree that the All-Mother/Father lives on, watching the events on Krynn, but few if any mortals worship this distant and silent creator. Some theologians believe the gods themselves pay homage to the All-Mother/Father. New tales and legends abound regarding the nature and fate of the High God as the folk of Krynn turn again to things unseen.

# The Gods of Good

## Paladine, The Dragon's Lord

Paladine is Father of Good and Master of Law. During the Age of Dreams, Paladine led the gods in creation. Paladine and Takhisis, Queen of Darkness, infused the raw fury of chaos with form and purpose, creating the first material beings—dragons. Takhisis, jealous the first creations were not entirely hers, corrupted the chromatic dragons to evil. Paladine replaced his fallen children with the good, metallic dragons, but Takhisis's act began the rift between good and evil.

In one of history's darkest hours, when Takhisis loomed over the world like an inescapable plague, Paladine realized he needed a more powerful weapon for good. Joining with his sons Kiri-Jolith—god of war, glory, honor, and duty—and Habbakuk—god of harmony and nature—Paladine created the Knights of Solamnia. Today, Paladine is honored by all orders of the Solamnic Knights. He is patron of the Order of the Rose.

Paladine's constellation guards Gilean's constellation (the Book of Knowledge) because truth and knowledge are essential weapons in combatting Evil. During the War of the Lance, the constellations of Paladine and Takhisis both vanished, a warning to Krynn. Once the Dark Queen was defeated and banished, the stars returned to their proper positions.

Paladine influences order, hope, light, rulership, and guardianship. His symbols are a silver triangle, a pine tree (Silvanesti), or an anvil (Thorbardin). The colors that represent Paladine are silver and white.

**Other Names:** Draco Paladin (Ergoth), Skyblade (Goodlund), Dragonlord (Mithas), E'li (Silvanesti), Thak the Hammer (Thorbardin), Bah'Mut (Istar), the Great Dragon (Solamnia), Fizban (Goodlund).

### Paladine's avatars

After the dark days of the Cataclysm, Paladine reentered the world in the form of the befuddled old wizard Fizban the Fabulous. Mishap upon mishap piles up around the flustered Fizban but, in the end, all mistakes work together to form a startling victory.

As a greater god, Paladine can maintain many avatars at once. Another form is a perpetually smiling, rotund, hard-of-hearing priest who sees the best in everyone, and the best is always drawn out. He also appears as an elderly warrior with a dragon crest. In this form, he wears a Solamnic mustache and no beard. Despite thinning hair and creaking joints, he remains youthfully nimble and intuitive when the need arises. Deadly in battle, he is even more skilled as a statesman, swaying crowds with his eloquent speeches.

## Mishakal, healing hand

Among most good people of Krynn, Mishakal is worshipped as the "Healer." In pre-Cataclysm days, she was the most revered of the ministering gods, her many temples teaching the art of healing. Nearly every community in Ansalon had a priest of Mishakal to tend to the populace's health and, in recent days, the new clergy of Mishakal is working to renew this custom.

In the War of the Lance she earned other appellations: "Light Bringer," "Bearer of Light," and "Quen Illumini."

These names reflect the discovery of the legendary Disks of Mishakal, platinum disks engraved with knowledge of the good gods. This tangible proof revived faith in the true gods across the world.

Mishakal is Paladine's wife and advisor. The couple have twin sons, Habbakuk and Kiri-Jolith, and a third named Solinari.

Mishakal influences healing, knowledge, fertility, life, beauty, and blessing. Her symbol is a blue infinity symbol. Her priests wear sky blue.

**Other Names:** Ka-Mel-Sha, Healer in the Home (Kharolis/Tarsis), Mesalax (Thorbardin), Meshal (Icewall), Mishas (Ergoth), Quenesti Pah (Silvanesti), Quen Illumini (Qualinesti), Skymistress (Goodlund), the Blue Lady (Balifor, Hylo), Empress (Mithas), Bearer of Light, Light Bringer (Solamnia).

### Mishakal's avatars

Mishakal most commonly appears as a beautiful woman in excellent health and physical condition. Her flawless skin radiates a golden light unless she wishes to disguise herself. Even if she has dampened her radiance, her latent power often deepens the natural blues in objects around her—blue blossoms, blue lakes, blue eyes, and so forth. She wears a robe and carries no armor or weaponry except her glowing blue crystal staff.

## Majere, Master of Mind

Majere is the god of organization, industry, and control, as well as meditation, faith, and dreams. Majere creates and inspires the martial arts and all disciplines that lead to honest confrontation of oneself. Majere's worshippers seek simple lives, devoid of luxury but filled with meditation, self-discipline, and deep thought.

Majere worked hand-in-hand with Paladine in creating and populating Krynn. According to some scholars, Majere's crowning creations are the insects of Krynn, who emulate the quiet god's unassuming grace, introspective complexity, and ceaseless industry. As Astinus once said, "Each of Majere's insects is an elegant complexity of legs and armor that no gnomish machine could ever match."

Majere influences meditation, control, thought, faith, mercy, and inspiration. His symbols are a copper spider, a single rose (Qualinesti, Silvanesti), or a mantis (Solamnia). His colors are copper and red.

**Other Names:** Manthus (Ergoth), Mantis of the Rose (Qualinesti), Matheri (Silvanesti), Nadir the Dreamsender (Mithas).

### Majere's avatars

On Krynn, this quiet god takes one of two forms. The first is a beautiful, blind female oracle. Despite her youth and loveliness, the oracle is utterly bald. She has fine features, a thin, sloping nose, and full lips. Majere also assumes the form of an ancient man, equally bald. His stooped body is wrapped in a burlap robe and he carries no weapon. In this form, Majere's perpetual smile of serenity proves unnerving to those who are not truthful with themselves.



## Kiri-Jolith, Sword of Justice

Kiri-Jolith is the god of glory, honor, obedience, justice, and righteous warfare. Paladins and fighters who embrace good revere Kiri-Jolith. His constellation threatens that of the Queen of Darkness in the night sky.

Kiri-Jolith is the oldest son of Paladine and Mishakal, preceding his twin Habbakuk by mere moments. Inspirational in forming the Knights of Solamnia, he is patron of the Order of the Sword.

Kiri-Jolith is a war god, but not one possessed by bloodlust and needless violence. He represents righteous warfare, launched to right grievous wrongs. Though his temper is not swift, it is sure when combat is justified.

Kiri-Jolith has a strong sense of honor and fair play. He targets only the guilty and avoids involving innocents. Kiri-Jolith cannot tolerate tyranny, fighting it with tireless heroism and discipline. He aggressively seeks to rebuild his power base. Kiri-Jolith actively recruits for the Knights of Solamnia, seeking warriors with courage, heroism, self-sacrifice, and obedience. Priests of Kiri-Jolith seek out evil and bring the battle to it.

The Sword of Justice influences war, battle, courage, and heroism. His symbols are bison's horns or a horned battle axe (Thorbardin, Kharolis). His priests wear brown and white.

**Other Names:** Corij (Ergoth), Kijo the Blade (Thorbardin), Jolith (Kharolis/Tarsis), Qu'an the Warrior (Uigan), Emperor (Mithas).

### Kiri-Jolith's avatars

Kiri-Jolith most commonly takes the avatar form of a Knight of Solamnia, resplendent in beautiful plate armor. He often wields a heavy lance in battle, the weapon bearing some semblance to the famed Dragonlance. Occasionally, Kiri-Jolith takes the avatar form of a huge minotaur wielding a battle axe.

## Habbakuk, Fisher King

Son of Paladine and Mishakal, Habbakuk is Kiri-Jolith's younger twin. He created and rules all creatures of land and sea in his likeness. Habbakuk is as much feared as he is loved. Because he represents the eternal cycle of nature, Habbakuk symbolizes eternal life.

Hale and hearty, Habbakuk is always immersed in and obsessed with the present moment. This obsession makes him care-free and boisterous one moment and predatory and silent the next. Some confuse this latter aspect with cruelty or evil, but Habbakuk unfailingly acts for good.

Habbakuk specifically seeks to reclaim the Silvanesti homeland, working with the neutral gods of nature. Because Habbakuk founded the Knights of the Crown, their quests often help nature. Habbakuk opposes the evil Sea Queen Zebaim.

Habbakuk influences animal life, the sea, creation, and passion. His symbol is a blue bird, or a blue phoenix (Ergoth). His colors are deep blue and white.

**Other Names:** The Blue Phoenix (Ergoth, Silvanesti, Qualinesti), Skylord (Balifor, Goodlund), Sea Lord (Mithas).

### Habbakuk's avatars

Habbakuk occasionally appears as a large blue bird or a phoenix aglow with blue flames. At sea, Habbakuk assumes

the form of a giant blue dolphin. Purportedly, he has taken many other forms, including a badger, a wild elf, a serious but clever kender, a tall ranger with wildly black hair and intensely blue eyes, a wiry druid with white hair and beard, and many other creatures. In these guises, the color blue typically appears in the creature's coloration or clothing.

## Branchala, Song of Life

A companion of Habbakuk since the beginning of time, the Bard King Branchala imbued Krynn's first creatures with the lyric and untamed melody of his immortal soul. Some even say that all hearts beat in time to the mysterious melodies. Elves and kender consider Branchala the highest god.

Like all bards, Branchala loves music, singing, dancing, and merriment. Branchala seeks singers and storytellers to spread news of the victories won by the Heroes of the Lance. He encourages Ansalon's folk to rebuild their world.

Branchala influences elves, kender, music, forests, and beauty. His symbols are a bard's harp or a flute (Goodlund, Qualinesti, Silvanesti). His colors are yellow and green.

**Other Names:** Songmaster (Goodlund), Astra (Qualinesti), Astarin (Silvanesti), Bran (Ergoth), Gardener (Mithas), Bardilun (Thorbardin).

### Branchala's avatars

Branchala's avatars assume the form of whatever folk he is visiting. When choosing to mingle with mortals, he dampens his deific glow. In this way, he can join in festivities without garnering bothersome adulation.

Branchala's avatars unfailingly display some association with the forest. He appears as a woodsman, a ranger, a bard from a great forest, or even a heathen druid-any guise associated with trees.

## Solinari, Mighty Hand

Solinari, third son of Paladine and Mishakal, is the god of good magic. He established the Order of the White Robes. He happily discusses any topic of magic in infinite and boring detail. Aside from Krynn, Solinari treasures magic over every aspect of life, death, and afterlife.

He seeks to bring a great influx of worthy mages into the White Robes. He works with Lunitari to strengthen magic on Ansalon. Followers of Solinari seek out lost libraries, treasure vaults, and any ruin that may hold spell books or magical items.

Solinari influences good magic. His symbol is a white circle or sphere. His followers wear robes of white or silver.

**Other Names:** Solin (Ergoth), White-eye (Goodlund, Balifor), God's Eye (Thorbardin), Ivory Disk (Hylo), Beacon (Mithas).

### Solinari's avatar

Because Solinari is closer to Krynn than the nonmagical gods, he rarely assumes his avatar form. When he must directly intervene, he appears as an ancient, white-robed wizard. Unlike Fizban (avatar of Paladine), Solinari's avatar has a lucid, insightful, and recursive intellect, though his mumblings often become too frenetic and cryptic to decipher.

# Gods of Neutrality

## Gilean, Void

Before creation, the High God wrote the *Tobril*—the book of all knowledge and true names—to lay down the designs of the universe. But none among the gods he made was trustworthy enough to guard the *Tobril*. So the High God found Gilean, a scribe so scrupulous as to have never penned an error. The High God brought Gilean back to the dawn of creation and entrusted him with the *Tobril*, saying, “Read those passages you may. Their knowledge will make you a god equal with all others. But guard this knowledge, for on the day another reads of it, you shall surely die.” Gilean has guarded the book ever since.

Gilean is modest in all things, never boasting of his knowledge or power. He takes a scholar's delight in watching others discover truth and solve problems.

The High God also charged Gilean with leading the Neutral gods and maintaining the balance between the families of Good and Evil. Gilean understands and appreciates both Paladine and Takhisis. When one side grows too powerful, Gilean allies briefly with the other side or provides it a bit of knowledge, like a merchant balancing a scale.

Although Gilean knows Good had to win the War of the Lance for Krynn to survive, he fears that the good gods' strength occasionally surpasses their wisdom. Gilean seeks more worshippers and priests to help him safeguard the balance.

Gilean influences knowledge. His symbol is an open book. His color is gray.

**Other Names:** Gilean the Book, Gray Voyager, the Sage, the Gate of Souls.

### Gilean's avatars

Gilean takes the form of a book-toting scholar of middle age, intent on a particular topic and absent-minded about everything else. This male or female avatar may appear as a human, elf, dwarf, or kender. Although apparently self-absorbed, Gilean slyly tests the preconceptions of folk he encounters. Those who learn from such tests gain a bit of secret knowledge or an answer to a troubling question.

## Sirrion, Flowing Flame

Sirrion, god of creative flame and natural power, sculpts fire into beautiful forms. He controls every flame, from the blazing sun to the low-burning wick, channeling and filtering the feral power into useful forms. Sirrion is not always tame: he sometimes sparks forest fires to clear rotten trees and allow young forests to grow; he also burns children who play with a candle flame, teaching them to respect fire. Though he desires to make fire useful, he wishes even more to make it beautiful.

Sirrion's companion is Shinare, goddess of wealth and commerce. They quarrel because Sirrion is temperamental and artistic while Shinare is practical and opportunistic.

Sirrion's celestial symbol is his planet.

Like the flames he controls, Sirrion flares quickly into fiery passion and smolders long in quiescence. His passions respond to fluxes in nature.

Sirrion cares little for mortal followers, though the beauty

and power of fire draw many to him. Gnomes especially love Sirrion because of the steam power and smoke powder he provides.

Sirrion influences flame, natural power, change, and transformation. His symbol is multi-colored fire. His followers wear bright reds and yellows.

**Other Names:** Firemaster, the Alchemist, the Wizard (Mithas).

### Sirrion's avatars

Sirrion prefers to appear in fire and auguries of smoke or ash. When he does take an avatar form, Sirrion is a tall man with flaming hair, beard, and eyebrows. His robe periodically changes color the way flames do. In battle, he wields a two-handed *flame* tongue sword that no mortal can touch.

## Reorx, Forge

The dwarves of Ansalon consider Reorx—god of manufacture, technology, and metallurgy—to be the greatest of gods. Humans see him as merely the rotund helper of Kiri-Jolith.

Reorx tamed chaos to forge the world. His second greatest creation, the Greystone of Gargath, led to the emergence of dwarves, gnomes, and kender. Many consider the forge god father of these races. Reorx's celestial symbol is his planet.

Dwarves report that Reorx displays many dwarven virtues. He is sober, pragmatic, and dispassionate. He seeks efficient solutions to any problems. The art of smithing occupies him primarily, though he also has a passing interest in mining.

Humans see Reorx as a rotund, jolly dwarf given to excesses of gambling and drinking. His frivolity and jocularly make him a wandering festival.

Reorx has strong ties to the demihuman races of Krynn. Dwarves are his foremost followers, remaining faithful even through the Cataclysm. Because of their fidelity, Reorx works hard to restore the glory of the dwarven race. He has forged an alliance with Shinare to spur dwarven industry. Reorx also works closely with tinker gnomes, inspiring them to some of their grander inventions. And, despite their scatter-brained tendencies, Reorx loves kender, who were created by the Graygem of Gargath.

Humans are another matter. If they know of Reorx at all, they regard him as comical. Even so, Reorx occasionally tests humans to see if they are ready to return to faith.

Reorx influences dwarves, weapons, and technology. His symbol is a forging hammer, or a dwarven hammer (Thor-bardin). His colors are slate gray and red.

**Other Names:** Anvil (Elian), the Weaponmaster (Mithas), Reorx the Master (Gnomes), Reorx the Craftsman (Kender).

### Reorx's avatars

Reorx takes the form of a powerful dwarven warrior, magical hammer always in hand. Beneath his deeply-tanned skin rest massive muscles. His long beard contains numerous braids and is the blue-gray of tempered steel. Reorx carries a unique dwarven throwing hammer, and wears a beautiful breastplate of adamantine. Dwarves see the avatar as the perfect dwarven warrior in all aspects.

## Chislev The Beast

Chislev is nature incarnate. According to legend, the seasons change with her moods: her fear brings the fall, her despair the winter, her hope the springtime, and her joy the summer. In addition to mortal worship, Chislev receives the praise of every beast; every blade of grass turns toward her as toward the sun.

Chislev's celestial symbol is her planet.

Chislev feels each wound on Krynn's surface. She, more than any other god, works to restore the land in the wake of the War. She especially wishes to heal Silvanesti. To this end, her priests work in concert with Habbakuk's. Chislev opposes rampant industry and disputes Shinare's notion that industry needs more attention than nature.

Chislev influences nature, wilds, and the beasts. Her symbol is a feather hued in her three colors: brown, yellow, and green.

**Other Names:** Wild One (Mithas), the Wilds.

### Chislev's avatars

Chislev usually appears as a beautiful human or elven woman. In either form, her hair glows like golden sunlight, and her clothes appear to be made from living plants. She carries a living wooden staff. On occasions when she does not wish to speak with anyone, she appears as a unicorn.

## Zivilyn, Tree of Life

Zivilyn, god of all wisdom, is the celestial Tree of Life. His branches and roots extend into all times and places. Much as Gilean holds the knowledge of the universe, Zivilyn holds its wisdom. He acts not according to the dictates of his mind, but according to those of his heart.

Because wisdom is incomplete without knowledge and knowledge is incomplete without wisdom, Zivilyn and Gilean work closely together. Zivilyn is the companion of Chislev; most mortals view this relationship as a perfect marriage.

Zivilyn's celestial symbol is his planet.

Zivilyn works with Chislev to restore nature because nature is the cradle of wisdom. He wants to teach the folk of Krynn a wisdom that transcends good and evil. Zivilyn occasionally sends worshippers in search of lost libraries, though often he calls them to seek wisdom in themselves.

Zivilyn influences wisdom; his symbol is a great green or gold tree, sometimes a vallenwood. His colors are green and gold.

**Other Names:** World Tree, Tree of Life (Qualinesti, Silvanesti), Wise One (Mithas).

### Zivilyn's avatars

Zivilyn assumes many different forms. Some have seen him as an old, balding man with a long beard. Though sighted, his eyes appear as twin windows looking out into space. Persons who gaze into those eyes learn their future, including the circumstances of their death. Others report Zivilyn as a prophetic child with black skin, white hair, and eyes of quicksilver. Recently, several scholars have even proposed that the ageless Astinus of Palanthus is a branch of Zivilyn. After all, Zivilyn may maintain several avatars at one time, and Astinus may be one of them. In whatever form, Zivilyn wields a simple wooden cane that obeys any command it is given.

## Shinare, Winged Victory

Shinare—goddess of wealth, industry, and commerce—has many dwarven worshippers, for they appreciate her love of wealth and industry. All folk consider her the champion of freedom and self-destiny. Shinare cannot tolerate laziness. She ascribes poverty to stupidity or sloth. In her eyes, the idle and unproductive are slowly dying.

Shinare's companion is Sirrion, god of creative fire. Their opposite temperaments clash, but they stay together. Her celestial symbol is her planet.

Shinare aggressively recruits followers, claiming that only industry and progress can save Ansalon. Though beleaguered by her capricious mate, Sirrion, Shinare considers her greatest foe to be Hiddukel, god of corrupt business.

Shinare influences wealth, industry, freedom, and power. Her symbol is a griffin's wing. Her colors are gold, silver, and brown.

**Other Names:** Winged One (Silvanesti, Qualinesti), Silver Master (Thorbardin), Walking Liberty (Ergoth), Balance or the Scales (Mithas).

### Shinare's avatars

Shinare most often assumes the guise of a rich, portly matron or merchant. She wears expensive clothing and jewelry, and a belt of finest silver encircles her waist. When appearing to the dwarves, she takes the form of a male dwarven merchant, decked in rich clothing that drips with gems and precious metals. Because dwarves so espouse her philosophies, she acquiesces to their stubborn insistence that she is male. Mortal gender should not stand in the way of progress.

## Lunitari, Veiled Maiden

Lunitari, goddess of Neutral magic and illusions, was born of Gilean and an unknown mother. She founded the wizardly Order of the Red Robes to promote neutral magic.

Lunitari and Solinari have long been friends and work well together. Like the other gods of magic, Lunitari chooses to remain close to Krynn to govern her order of mages. Lunitari's heavenly symbol, the small red moon, is called the "witching light."

Lunitari is a vivacious young woman with a mischievous streak. She delights in all magic and illusions, but loves Neutral spellcasting most of all.

Lunitari wants to bring a magical renaissance to Ansalon. To achieve this aim, she works closely with Solinari, though she also heavily promotes her Red Robed Wizards.

Lunitari influences neutral magic and illusions. Her symbol is a red circle or sphere. Her color is red or magenta.

**Other Names:** Luin (Ergoth), Red-Eye (Goodlund), Night Candle (Thorbardin), Maid of Illusion (Mithas).

### Lunitari's avatars

Lunitari usually takes the form of a beautiful, red-haired human woman clad in red robes. She has a cunning and capricious smile. Occasionally, Lunitari cloaks her avatar in a powerful illusion, of anything from a draconian to a gnome. Lunitari carries ruby red darts as her weapon of last resort.

# The Gods of Evil

## Takhisis, queen of darkness

Not even fools or children speak the name Takhisis lightly. Her name summons darkness, destruction, and death. Swathed in shadow and hatred, she desires only the domination and destruction of Krynn and its folk.

In the Age of Dreams, Takhisis was Paladine's mate and consort. But when they forged the first beings, the dragons built of chaos, Takhisis grew selfish. Jealous she had to share the power of creation, the Dark Queen corrupted the dragons.

She quitted Paladine and consorted with Sargonnas, god of fury and vengeance. They had two offspring: Nuitari and Zebboim. The passion between Takhisis and Sargonnas vacillates between insatiable lust and rancorous loathing. Takhisis bore one other child, Artha, demi-goddess of wanton lust and greed. Believed to be a child from a passing liaison with Chemosh, Artha was in truth sired by Hiddukel.

Takhisis is the embodiment of Evil. She enjoys preying upon the weaknesses of others, using their hearts' desires to enslave them. She is cold and brilliant; exploitation has become second nature to her. Takhisis hates good, loves cruelty, and hoards wealth. She happily dwells in her former prison, the Nine Hells, plotting her next return.

What Takhisis needs now is a group of powerful lieutenants to replace her losses in the War of the Lance. She also seeks the eggs of good dragons, to create more powerful draconians. Though Paladine is her long-time enemy, Kiri-Jolith causes her the most concern. She has ordered all her followers to slay his worshippers and desecrate his temples on sight.

Takhisis influences night, evil dragons, hatred, intrigue, and chaos. Her symbol is a black crescent. Her colors are the black of utter darkness and the iridescent black of beetle wings.

**Other Names:** Dragon Queen (Ergoth, Silvanesti), Tii'Mhut (Istar), She of the Many Faces (Hylo), Mai-tat (Tarsis), Nilat the Corruptor (Icwall), Tamex the False Metal (Thorbardin). Lady Chaos (Mithas), Darklady (Ogre), Mwarg (Hobgoblin).

### Takhisis's avatars

Takhisis can assume any form, but her two favorites are a five-headed chromatic dragon and a beautiful temptress of human or elven stock. Rumors claim she also appears as a giant serpent and any multiheaded creature such as a hydra or leviathan.

For three millennia after Huma's victory, and again after the recent Whitestone Council that ended the War of the Lance, Takhisis's avatar was banished from Ansalon. Even so, she can act through agents and her offspring.

## Sargonnas, Dark Vengeance

Little is known of Takhisis's consort. He is the brooding, sometimes explosive god of vengeance, rage, deserts, and volcanoes. Sargonnas embodies the destructive passion of fire. His greatest ally, Takhisis, is also his greatest enemy, and he routinely plots both for and against his Queen.

Sargonnas is a fuming and treacherous god. Occasionally, he works his revenge through insidious means. Plotting for

years, even centuries, he presents a calm and diabolically magnetic personality—a mask of the fires within. More often, Sargonnas erupts with fury, consuming everything in his path. He always anticipates similar deceptions. He is, in a word, paranoid.

Sargonnas, Takhisis's consort, is enraged over the Dark Queen's infidelity. He has begun leaking Takhisis's plans to interested neutral and good powers. Sargonnas's final objective is ascendancy over his consort.

Sargonnas influences vengeance, destruction, intrigue, volcanoes, fire, and deserts. His symbol is a stylized red condor, or a red fist (Thorbardin, Istar). His colors are red and black.

**Other Names:** Argon (Istar, Ergoth), The Firebringer (Hylo), Misal-Lasim (Tarsis), Gonnas the Willful (Icwall), Sargonax the Bender (Thorbardin), Kinthalas (Silvanesti), Kinis (Qualinesti), Destroyer (Mithas).

### Sargonnas's avatars

Sargonnas prefers the form of a red condor with a silky, enticing voice. He also appears as a fire elemental of lava with a roaring voice that sounds like a dwarven blast furnace. Occasionally, he takes the form of a human, kender, or minotaur warrior, but he is loath to do so.

## Morgion, Black Wind

Morgion, god of disease and decay, refuses the company of the other gods and does not discuss plans with them. Those unfortunate enough to encounter this reclusive god see a rotting humanoid corpse—neither male nor female-topped with a goat's head. Secrecy is Morgion's way.

Morgion despises all healthy things, striving to destroy or corrupt them with disease and decay. Morgion works to spread plagues in the wake of the lance. Here he actively sabotages Mishakaf's attempts to heal the people of Ansalon. His priests infect Mishakaf's priests whenever possible. For this task he needs more priests, and searches most diligently among the dark dwarves and the other creatures of the underworld.

Morgion influences disease, decay, plague, weakness, and plotting. His symbol is a hood with two red eyes, an upside-down axe (Thorbardin), or a rat's claw (Hylo). His followers wear deep brown and black.

**Other Names:** H'rar (Ergoth, Istar), Gormion (Tarsis), Morgi (Icwall), Morgax the Rustlord (Thorbardin), Pestilence (Mithas), Anthrax Goatlord (Hobgoblin).

### Morgion's avatars

Morgion has two favorite avatars: a thick, roiling black cloud with glowing red eyes, and a priestess or executioner wearing a black hood and veil. Morgion speaks in a harsh whisper.

## Chemosh, Lord of Death

In the Age of Dreams, Chemosh, lord of undead, was drawn by Takhisis to Krynn to marshal the legions of death.

As lord of false redemption, Chemosh offers "eternal life": the takers spend immortality in an undead and eternally corrupted body. Chemosh rarely explains this when making a



pact. Before his victims can reconsider, they find themselves his minions.

Dead and dying creatures fascinate Chemosh. The desperate, thrashing movements, the hoary rattle of water in the lungs, the smell of decay all delight him. Even so, he plans never to experience death himself, growing in power and longevity with each minion he gains.

Chemosh works closely with Takhisis to raise undead leaders for her armies on Ansalon. In addition, Chemosh entices living recruits with false promises of immortality. He seeks to corrupt potential heroes of good.

Chemosh influences ravagers, undead and all nemeses. His symbol is a yellow skull. His colors are black and sickly yellow.

**Other Names:** Aelet (Ergoth), Dron of the Deep (Tarsis), Chemos Joton (Icewall), Khemax (Thorbardin), Lifebane (Mithas), Orkrust (Hobgoblin).

#### *Chemosh's avatars*

Chemosh appears as either a rakishly handsome man in a black robe or as a lich (an undead sorcerer) clad in rotting finery. In either guise, he bears a small obsidian sickle. The sickle directs him to the target with the fullest life force. Chemosh's true form is a bloated satyr with a goat skull head.

### *Zeboim, Darkling Sea*

Zeboim the Sea Queen is the impetuous and volatile daughter of Takhisis and Sargonnas. Her unpredictable tempers make her a dangerous foe and a lethal friend.

As creator of the sea, tempests, and weather, Zeboim receives petitions from seamen wishing good weather and safe journey. Though some manage to avoid her rage, many who displease her with some real or imagined slight never see harbor again.

Dwarves know nothing of Zeboim. To pay back their ignorance, Zeboim delights in spilling dwarves from boats and watching their heavy-boned bodies sink to the bottom.

Despite her rebellious nature, Zeboim refuses to cross her mother Takhisis. Neither does she cooperate too fully. On the other hand, Zeboim ignores her father Sargonnas, considering him weak and unworthy of Takhisis's attentions.

Zeboim has never had many priests, and cares little. She wars against Habbakuk, god of marine life, for control over the seas. She provides her followers the vast wealth of lost treasure ships.

Zeboim influences the sea, storms, tempests, weather, undead sea races, and jealousy. Her symbol is a turtle shell pattern. Her colors are green and red.

**Other Names:** Rann (Ergoth), Zyr (Tarsis), Zebir Jotun (Ice-wall), Bhezomix (Thorbardin), Maelstrom (Mithas).

#### *Zeboim's avatars*

Though Zeboim can assume a human form, she favors the form of a giant sea turtle with a human female face.

### *Hiddukel, Prince of Lies*

Hiddukel, god of ill-gotten wealth and deals, is patron god of evil businessmen and dishonest merchants. A cunning deal-maker, Hiddukel trades in living souls. Some say Hiddukel can even barter with Takhisis and come out ahead.

Hiddukel controls all ill-gotten wealth, using it to corrupt

honest and greedy men alike. Greed and mischief drive all his transactions. One of his deals resulted in the creation of the Graygem, an artifact that wreaked havoc on Krynn.

Hiddukel constantly seeks bargains, which generally entail the swapping of material objects for his victims' spirits, and often their lives. Although he is calculating and predatory, Hiddukel often takes the guise of a fawning and fumbling merchant.

In the economic havoc after the War of the Lance, Hiddukel works to gain a choke hold on national economies. He directly opposes Shinare and, to a lesser extent, Reorx. Hiddukel offers great rewards to his followers for destroying the priests and temples of Shinare. Not being much of a fighter, he fears Reorx and will not risk angering him.

Hiddukel influences evil business practices, damned spirits, greed, slavery, and betrayal. His symbol is a broken merchant's scale. His followers wear red and bone.

**Other Names:** Betrayer (Mithas), Usk-Do (Hobgoblins), Hitax the Flaw (Thorbardin), M'Fistos (Istar).

#### *Hiddukel's avatars*

Hiddukel prefers to appear as an obese man with cold, beady eyes and an oily smile. He drapes his expansive girth with the finest brocade and his knuckles are knobbed with false gemstones. Hiddukel avoids physical combat, relying on spells and hired monster bodyguards.

### *Nuitari, Devouring Dark*

Nuitari, god of black magic, drew his evil nature from his parents, Takhisis and Sargonnas. The black moon, also called Nuitari, which is his symbol cannot be detected unless it eclipses other stars and moons.

While wandering Krynn in avatar form, Nuitari founded the wizardly Order of the Black Robes. This order espouses Nuitari's belief that magic should be secret and coveted.

Nuitari is perhaps the most approachable of the evil gods. His love for magic transcends his evil nature. An intense and quiet god, Nuitari displays a scholar's love for the magical arts. He continually researches new spells to grant his priests and wizards, seeking the universe's arcane secrets. But black magic comes at a price; though it grants its users incredible power, it also slowly takes control of them. Nuitari observes in wry amusement as those who try to master his art are overcome by its dark power.

Nuitari, like Solinari and Lunitari, seeks to increase the presence of magic on Ansalon. If he cannot recruit a mage to darkness, he may encourage him to go renegade, causing headaches for Solinari and Lunitari. He works distantly with the two other magic gods to bring more and better magic to Krynn. But Nuitari would love it all to be black magic.

Nuitari influences black magic. His symbol is a black circle or sphere. His followers wear robes of black.

**Other Names:** Nightreaver (Mithas), Darkness (Elian), Black Hand (Balifor), Ungod (Thorbardin).

#### *Nuitari's avatars*

Nuitari favors the form of a quiet, intense young man with jet-black hair and a long black robe. He also may appear as a wicked child.

# Delving The Past

The world of Krynn is ancient. Its face has changed, much as the face of a child changes over time to that of an elder. Before Krynn was even home to the mortals, it served as a battleground for the gods. This first celestial war remade the face of the world, as have the second and third and fourth wars. Through it all, the lands of Ansalon took one form or another upon the southern hemisphere. Many of Ansalon's faces are lost to history, but some long-lived folk remember two different aspects of their land: pre-Cataclysm and post-Cataclysm Ansalon.

## The World That Was

Before the Cataclysm, the land of Ansalon was whole. It stretched uninterrupted for 1,500 miles, from eastern Karthay to western Ergoth. Travelers claimed that, to see the world, one needed only a pair of shoes and a pair of eyes.

Only the Isle of Sancrist stood apart from the rest of the world. Legend told that it cracked away when the gnomes first lit into smokepowder (literally). Eleven great nations reigned during the three millennia before the Cataclysm: Sancrist, Ergoth, Hylo, Qualinesti, Thorbardin, Thoradin, Kharolis, Solamnia, Silvanesti, Balifor, and Istar, in west to east order. These brief sketches give a quick glimpse into the historical continuum. They allow the visitor some sense of the development of nations, the rise and fall of fortune and influence, and the role of chance in the world. The map shows how the impact of the fiery mountain affected the continent of Ansalon. By overlaying the pre-and post-cataclysm dimensions, it is possible to see what lands arose, which sank, and how the great rivers and mountains were wrenched from the land.

### Sancrist

In 3050 PC (PreCataclysm), gnomes following on the heels of the fleeing Graygem came to Sancrist and decided to stay. In the north of the isle stood a dormant volcano that the gnomes considered perfect ground for a glorious citadel. After years of excavation, the gnomes had created a vastly complex city that became their ancestral home. The gnomish name for the mountain was suitably lengthy and unpronounceable. A shorter appellation—“Mount Nevermind”—stuck when an Ergothian General stuttered over the name, saying, “Mount. . . urn . . . hmmm . . . uh . . . nevermind.”

In 2500 PC, the gnomish civilization on Sancrist came under the rule of the Ergothian Empire. This political tie bothered the gnomes little: the Sancrist Straits kept the empire at arm's length, as did the gnomish reputation for (accidentally) lethal inventions. In 1750 PC, forty years after the fall of Ergoth, the gnomes decided the Ergothians were not planning to return. Furtively, they declared their independence.

### Ergoth

Around 2600 PC, the human Ackal Ergot led a campaign of war and extortion that united the barbarian tribes of western Ansalon. The civilization that arose from his efforts bore his name and exhibited his talent for war and obsession with law. With stunning military campaigns, the empire grew in waves from its capital, Daltigoth. After many wars and many emper-

ors, Ergoth sprawled from the Turbidus Ocean in the west to Silvanesti in the east. By 2200 PC, Ergoth was the most vast civilization that Ansalon had ever seen.

In 1801 PC, the greatest son of the Ergothian Empire, Vinas Solamnus, learned of beauty and truth among the oppressed folk in the eastern provinces. Determined to free the folk of the east, he marched the Ergothian army upon Daltigoth.

In time, the emperor sued for peace. The new nation of Solamnia split Ergoth in two, taking from her all lands east of Palanthus and Xak Tsaroth.

### hylo

The kender nation of Hylo, founded in 2600 PC, exhibited none of Ergoth's concern for conquest and destiny. In fact, the birth of the nation occurred quite accidentally when a kender clan, marooned upon a floating citadel, coaxed the city to crash land upon the Sentinel Mountains. By 2500 PC, when the citadel was engulfed in vines and new forests, enough kender had precipitated nearby to create a city.

In 2450 PC, Ergoth “conquered” Hylo; human armies surrounded the land and claimed it a subjugated province of Ergoth. The kender shrugged and went about their business. When Ergoth instated a stiff tax of 20% of all transactions, the confused kender complied. After 50 years of collecting smooth stones and bits of phosphorescent moss from the kender, the empire abandoned taxation of its northern province. In 1791 PC, the fall of Ergoth liberated Hylo as well. The kender hardly noticed the change.

### qualinesti

Ergoth was founded on war; Qualinesti was founded on peace.

The Kinslayer War left the western Silvanesti elves uneasy. They despised the socially ingrained violence that had led to the war and felt like poor cousins of the eastern folk. After 40 years of dissatisfaction, they declared their independence. Finally, after 27 years of feuding between the two clans, Kith-Kanan engineered the Swordsheath Scroll. This revolutionary document granted the western elves their freedom, provided them a new homeland, and founded a new peace between Silvanesti, Thorbardin, and Ergoth.

In 2050 PC, the Great March began. For 20 years, the western Silvanesti moved slowly across the plains of Solamnia to their new forest homeland between Thorbardin and Ergoth. These Qualinesti elves wanted a capital that would be as beautiful as it was well-fortified. And so they built Qualinost.

### Thoradin and Thorbardin

In 3100 PC, the dwarves began building their first kingdom, Kal-Thax, which meant simply “Cold Forge.” This underground metropolis, founded upon withdrawal and isolation, grew only more oppressive and sunless with the passing years. The limestone caves were living: stalactites and stalagmites still formed, but no good ore lay there. By 2800 PC, Kal-Thax's heart had gone stone cold.

A group of younger dwarves wandered through the Khalkist Mountains until they found a rich vein of iron ore. The mine they dug upon that site in 2800 PC grew slowly into

a new metropolis, Thoradin, which means "New Hope." In 2750 PC the young community sent emissaries to the fatherland, Kal-Thax, to bear word of the new dwarven nation. The ambassadors found Kal-Thax strangely abandoned, its vast halls dark and its gates infested with bears and wild things. Twenty-five years later, when a party set out to reclaim the dwarven homeland, they could not even find its gates in the rugged mountains.

But the heart of Thoradin also went bad. In 2710 PC, the dwarves' delvings uncovered five magical stones-the dragon stones. Fearing the corruption of magic, the dwarves cast these stones from Thoradin's gates. In 2692 PC, the dragon stones happened into the wrong hands, and the Second Dragon War resulted. Shamed that their carelessness unleashed such havoc, the dwarves closed off Thoradin from the rest of the world in 2640 PC.

In 2150 PC, a clan of young hill dwarves migrated from the oppressive halls of Thoradin across 400 miles of plains to the rugged Kharolis Mountains. There they delved a new home, Thorbardin, which means "New Best Hope."

### Kharolis

This forbidding tundra land was a nation in name only. Here walrus men and ice bears easily outnumbered human and demihuman inhabitants. Even so, one jewel of civilization stood out in this frosty land: Tarsis. This port city on the west coast housed merchants, bankers, scholars, students, and mercenaries of every ilk.

### Solamnia

This huge nation bisected the continent of Ansalon. Despite its vastness and optimal positioning, Solamnia never achieved the great imperial power of Ergoth. The regions of Solamnia cohered not because of military might, but because of a common and cherished freedom.

The greatest strength of Solamnia lay in its morality. Always the nation strived to follow in the just and honorable path of its progenitor, Vinas Solamnus. The fact that even the commoners of Solamnia aspired to achieve the ideals of honesty and valor raised human civilization to a new level.

Certainly the jewel of Solamnia was the great port city of Palanthus, which had already become legendary by the Age of Might. Palanthus held the Temple of Paladine, the Tower of High Sorcery, the Great Library, the palace of the Lord of Palanthus, and the University of Palanthus.

But Solamnia's true capital was Vingaard Keep, a heavily fortified citadel guarding the confluence of the Vingaard River and a tributary.

### Silvanesti

The ancient land of Silvanesti took its name from the elven patriarch Silvanos who drove out the dragons and settled there in 3350 PC. The capital city of Silvanost was the creation of elves and nature together. Perhaps this harmonious life with nature allowed Silvanost to become the oldest surviving city in Ansalon.

In 2192 PC, a terrible war between elves and humans became a test of endurance for the nation. After over 100 years of battle, the war ended with the treaty known as the Sword-sheath Scroll. The western elves demanded a new homeland as part of the peace treaty, becoming the Qualinesti. Wound-

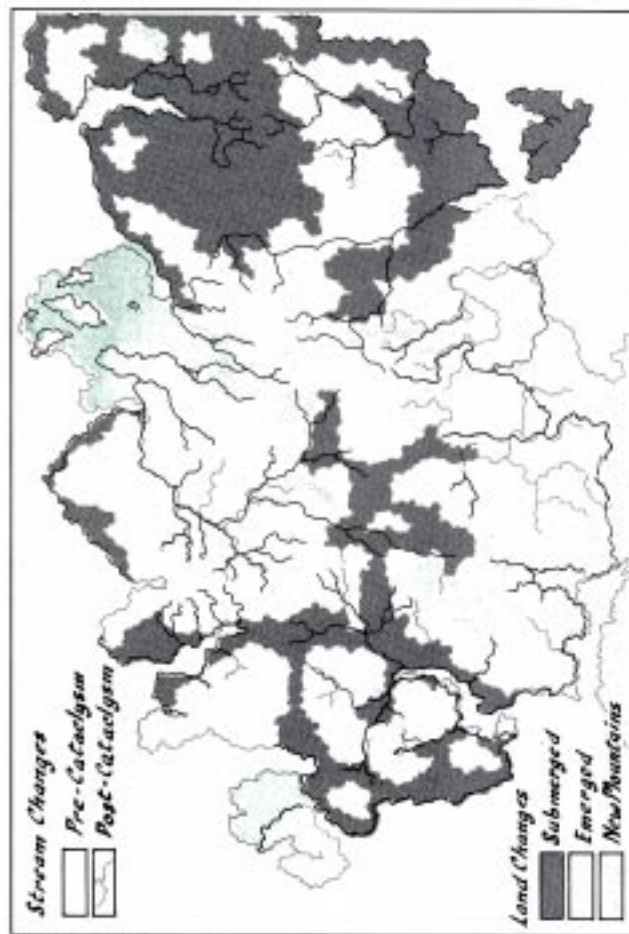
ed by this loss, the Silvanesti raised a hedge around their main forest to keep outsiders away.

### Balifor

In 3051, the Graygem broke loose from its captors, transforming those near at hand. A newly transformed kender named Balif gathered together others who had been similarly transformed by the stone. Balif called his wandering tribe the "kindred" or "kenderi." A long-time confidant of Silvanos, Balif received a deed from the elven ruler for lands east of Silvanesti. There, in a small forest similar to their homeland, the kender settled in 3043 PC. They called their city and their nation Balifor, in honor of Balif who brought them together. Despite the wanderlust that took the kender far and wide, most returned in time to their homeland. Eventually, three other small cities sprang up in the woodlands, though their names are now lost to time.

### Istar

For almost a millennium, Istar was merely a barbarian land on the edge of the Ergothian Empire. It lay cut off from the rest of the world by a ring of desert and wasteland. By 1799 PC, tribal nations had arisen, replacing the hunting clans that had gone before. Farming villages began to appear, in time growing into cities. Over the course of two centuries, the separate tribal nations of the land banded together into a confederation. By 1480 PC, the port capital of Istar became a channeling point for all trade from eastern Ansalon. The trade standards of Istar, created around 1100 PC, slowly spread



throughout Ansalon until by 800 PC, the coinage of Istar was accepted in all corners of the continent.

The expanding Istarian empire clashed with the kender in Balifor and the elves in Silvanesti. In time, diplomatic efforts brought treaties between the Istarians and their neighbors.

Then, in 280 PC, Istar installed the first Kingpriest—a ruler in matters both political and spiritual. The Kingpriest's first edict, World Righteousness, made Istar the self-proclaimed moral center of the world. By 6 PC, the Edict of Thought Control, which equated evil thoughts with evil deeds, proclaimed anger a capital offense equal to murder, and lust a capital offense equal to adultery. Such fanaticism was distasteful to the gods, and they responded by visiting the Cataclysm upon the world of Krynn.

## The Cataclysm

Although known universally as the Cataclysm, the event of the Zero Hour in fact saved rather than destroyed Krynn. The power of the Kingpriest of Istar had grown more destructive than that of the fiery mountain that fell upon the world.

The center point of the mountain's impact, the capital city of Istar, went from being the commercial, political, and spiritual center of the world to being the bottom-most point of the sea.

The force of the impact also reshaped Istar and the lands around. The eastern arm of the nation shattered into six islands. Balifor in the south segmented into a ragged peninsula. The narrow Bay of Balifor widened into a broad strait, with a new sea at its northern reaches. To the west, the already-impressive Khalkist Mountains roiled into an impassible series of ranges. And in the north, the floor of Thoradin Bay was thrust up violently, sending a tidal flood rushing from the new land.

Farther west, the lands cracked like the end of a whip. The bays that extended up from the south Turbidus Ocean and down from the north Turbidus Ocean came together, snaking across the sunken plains of Ergoth. Once inland, the water surged onto the flattened midlands, cutting Qualinesti in half and seeping all the way to Sanction in the Khalkist Mountains.

The central depression that split Qualinesti in the east also ran west, splitting Ergoth into northern and southern islands. The backlash of the impact caused volcanic activity on Sancrist that doubled the size of the island. Luckily, Mount Nevermind itself did not erupt. And, in the south, the sea bed rose, growing shallow enough for a continent of ice to cover the land.

## The Iconochronos of Astinus

Astinus of Palanthus, the renowned historian, has made great efforts to chronicle the history of Krynn in his scroll set, the Iconochronos. One long scroll depicts the history of Ansalon as an unravelling river of time in which famous events form clear currents.

The telling begins with the creation of the world, the Age of Starbirth. These accounts came from the Plates of Pakafhas—writings of an early historian and religious leader from the Age of Dreams.

Following this age is a span of uncertain years, called the Age of Dreams. This age was chronicled only in folk songs and ballads during the Age of Light that followed. These songs were compiled in the Lifescroll of Song by the elven

bard, Quevalin Soth from Silvanesti.

The Age of Light marks the ascendance of the races of elves and men. This age marks the “awakening” of magic through the arrival of the Graygem of Gargath, and the rise of Ergoth, the first empire of humans.

Recent discoveries have led historians to rename the second thousand years of Light the “Age of Right.” During this millennium, honest peasant folk rebelled against the injustice of Ergoth. Thus, Solamnia came into existence, and so too the Knights of Solamnia. Records of this period have only recently been unearthed: a cache of silver disks was found sealed away in the ancient tomb of the legendary knight, Huma.

The Age of Might followed the exile of dragons from the world. This age was well chronicled historically, beginning with the rulership of Karthay Pah in Istar. Scribes etched his deeds on plates of gold and silver, storing them on rings in his treasury. Two centuries after Karthay Pah's reign, a scribe spent three decades transcribing Pah's records onto scrolls for the Great Library. Though many were lost, some did survive, and it is from these and from Astinus's personal recollections that we learn of the blasphemy of the Kingpriest.

Finally, the Cataclysm, as recorded here, is a compilation of many legends and folktales. These stories come primarily from *Tale of the Nightfall Years*, a record of personal recollections and letters of the heroes and many of the Knights of Solamnia. Tale was penned by Astinus himself.

History, as recorded by Astinus, is divided into two parts: AC (Alt Cataclius, or “after the Cataclysm”) denotes the history from the Cataclysm to the present; PC (*Prae Cataclius*, or “before the Cataclysm”) denotes dates that have been renumbered backward from the Zero Hour of the Cataclysm. Dating in PC is only approximate.



## The River of Time

age of starbirth (age of gods)



*The High God Awakens.* Out of the chaos, there was thought and being; there was the High God. With celestial hands, the High God drew the plans for a new realm, a new beginning. These plans were written in a book called the *Tobril*, a book that makes gods of mortal folk.

the High God called.

There came an answer from two being: one of light, and one of darkness. They were lesser gods, seeking greatness in the chaos. The king and queen of wyrms, they were. They abandoned their twining struggles against each other and worked together to create a new place for them, a place for greatness.

Cilean is Drawn Forth. Out of chaos and out of time, the High God summoned a third god. He was Gilean, greatest of sages. Gilean alone, in all of time, was worthy to bear the High God's plans for the universe. He received the plans, the *Jobril*. Then, the High God departed, for the planning was done and the creation was about to begin.



*Reorx and the Companion Gods Come.* Together the three gods summoned helpers. Other, lesser gods came. The greatest of these was Reorx. "Give of yourself," he said, "and I will tame the chaos." And from the gods, Reorx forged a mighty hammer. With the hammer, he smote the chaos and it slowed.

Sparks flew from the hammer and lighted the heavens. And there were stars.

Krynn is Made. Reorx shaped a mighty globe and separated the lands and seas, the light and dark, the heavens and the soil. Then, the other gods gifted the world, each to his or her own. Krynn was blessed with plants and trees, creatures of the earth, water and air, seasons and weather, and untold beauty.

*Dragons are Made.* Together, Paladine and Takhisis guided the hand of Reorx and made five rulers of the world. Drawn from the savage elements and encased in frames of base metals, these rulers became one with the world. They were the dragons. But the Dark Queen coveted the dragons and corrupted them. Their colors were tarnished and lost to light.

*Good Dragons are Made.* Paladine mourned the loss of his

dragon children. He turned to Reorx for comfort and Reorx made five monuments to the lost dragons. He forged these monuments from precious metals. But, Paladine longed to behold his children whole, alive again. And so, he breathed life into the statues.



*All-Dragons War.* The gods, the dragons, the beasts of the world, and the light and the dark themselves made war over Takhisis's treacheries. Chaos swirled at the corners of the world, threatening to unmake it. When the gods saw the harm they caused their world, they withdrew, light gods to light, dark gods to

dark, and gray gods to gray. There they agreed to stay. They lived and loved for countless eons; thus were born the lesser gods, their children.

*The Stars are Claimed.* In the silence that followed, there came the sound of chimes, of heavenly singing. The gods pondered it, and saw that the stars lived. They shone like the gods themselves, shone as pieces of the gods. And the gods coveted these countless spirits.



*All-Saints War.* Once again war erupted in the heavens. The firmament shuddered with the struggles of the gods. The gods of light sought to nurture and lead these star spirits. The gods of darkness sought to bind and control them. The gods of gray sought only to set the fledgling spirits free.

*The Balance Restored.* Hearing the battle, the High God returned from the Void. And the High God knew wrath. From the fire of wrath, the High God forged the Balance; each family of gods could gift the spirits with one gift. Afterward, the gods must let the spirits be. The gods of light gave the spirits physical bodies so they might become masters of the world. The gods of darkness cursed them with weakness, want, and mortality, that the fearful spirits might be brought to serve Evil. And the gods of shadow gave unto the spirits free will, the ability to shape their own fates.

*Birthing Age.* And so, the peoples of the land were formed. The people of the land were three. Stony ogres there were, cold and beautiful, strong but hollow. Wooden elves rose like living trees, tall and regal, graceful, solitary, and proud. And, least of all, were creatures of clay-humans, short and common, simple and bestial. The humans had the capacity to destroy, and to love. These were the children of the world.

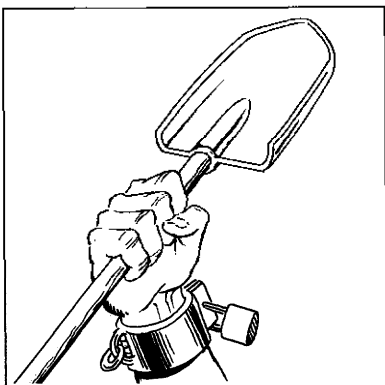
**age of dreams: 9000-5000 pc (foundation age)**

*The People Choose Places.* Ogres, first to awaken, claimed the mountains. From that lofty perch they gazed upon the world. Elves withdrew to the forests and there they lived in quiet harmony, pondering the world. But to humans fell the plains, and there, exposed to savage winds and rains, they grew savage themselves.

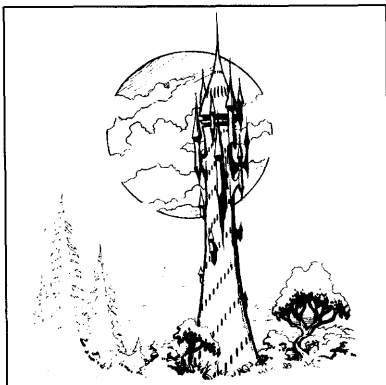


**8500-5000 PC Birth of Civilization.** Ogres set themselves to ordering the land. They seized and enslaved the humans to be their hands in toil. By human sweat and blood, the ogres built a mighty nation of cold stone. The elves watched as order grew.

**8700 PC Favored of Reorx.** Reorx gathered to himself humans who worshipped the hammer, who were filled with creation. With these humans, Reorx retired to a northern land. The clay folk would assist Reorx in his heavy labors. Over the centuries, these humans became the short Smith folk.

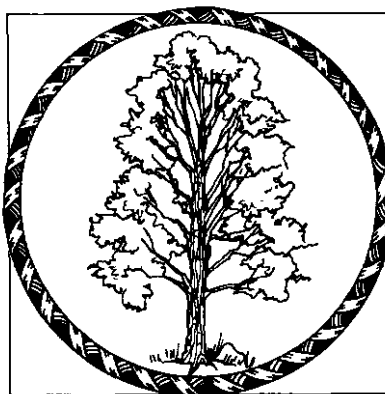


**6000-5000 PC Decline of Ogres.** As ogres embraced cruelty and vengeance, humans asserted their independence. The humans rose up to slay their masters. Civilization fell and barbarism reigned.



**5000-3000 PC Elves Ascendant.** Elves discovered the value of cooperation, and together they sought to create their own civilization in the southern enchanted woods. Yet this was homeland to the dragons. Over time, they mustered for war.

**age of light: 4000-2000 pc (age of elves)**



**4000 PC Rise of House Silvanos.** The first Sinthal-Elish, the elfen council of high ones, was convened by Silvanos. The many elf families unified for the first time, swearing an oath of allegiance to Silvanos. Balif, son of the second largest family, was made Silvanos's lieutenant. The elves prepared for war.



**3500-3350 PC The first Dragon War.** Elves allied to drive dragons from their chosen lands, but the opposition was fierce. The three gods of magic gifted the elves with five magical stones, which captured the dragons' spirits. The elves buried these stones deep in the tallest mountains of the land. The

gods of magic were exiled for their interference.

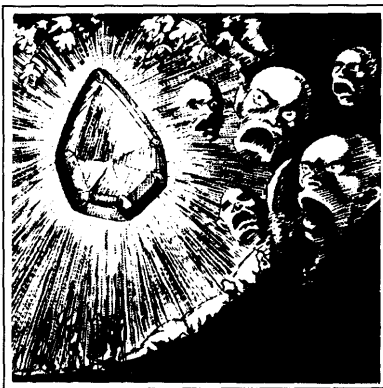
*Graystone forged.* The banished gods of magic had Hiddukel trick Reorx into creating a Graystone (also called the Graygem). They said this stone would remind them of faraway Krynn, from whose lands they were forbidden. Reorx did so, setting the stone on the moon of Lunitari. There, in secret, the gods of magic filled the stone with their essence.

**3350 PC Building of Silvanesti.** The second Sinthal-Elish was held, once again pledging allegiance to Silvanos. The Kingdom of Silvanesti was decreed and all the elfen families were granted lands. The elves copied the ancient and long-lost civilization of the now-barbaric ogres.

*The Graystone Released.* The plans of the gods of magic entered a second phase. They asked Hiddukel to trick one of Reorx's Smiths into stealing the powerful Graystone from the surface of Lunitari. The Smith fumbled, dropping the stone from the sky onto Krynn. With it, magic reentered the world.

**3100 PC Arrival of the Graystone and Magic.** Reorx punished and deformed his Smith folk for their pride and commanded them to recapture the Graystone. They fled their homeland and followed the Graystone. Wild magic was released into the world into the hands of some reborn Smiths. They became the dwarven mages called Scions.

**3100-2900 PC Kal-Thax is Built.** Fleeing the Graystone's chaos, the other Smiths hid in caves in the bluffs of Ansalon. There they built the first dwarven kingdom: Kal-Thax.



**3051 PC *Graystone of Cargath.*** A ruler named Gargath captured the Graystone and bound it between two god-gems. The Smiths demanded its return. Gargath recruited men and stubborn ogres to defend his prize. Elves, fascinated by wild magic, joined the Smiths to reclaim the stone. When at last the stone

was freed, it escaped, but not before touching those present and changing their forms to reflect their natures. Thus, goblins and minotaurs, kender and gnomes came into being. Onward the Graystone wandered, changing the world as it went.

**2800 PC *Thoradin is Delved.*** Seeking to escape the Graystone's ravages, the smiths-now dwarves-became masters of mining, and began to delve the new kingdom of Thoradin in the Khalkist Mountains. They abandoned Kal-Thax for all time.

**2750 PC *Balif Dies.*** A kender hero named Balif, a close friend of the elf-lord Silvanos, died. Balif built the first kingdom of kender in Balifor.

**2710 PC *Dragon Stones Discovered.*** The dwarves found the five magical dragon stones that the elves had buried deep in the Khalkist Mountains after the First Dragon War. Hating magic due to the Graystone, the dwarves returned the stones to the surface.



**2692-2645 PC *The Second Dragon War.*** The dragons awoke and struck south at Silvanesti. Accompanied by great armies of lizard people, the dragons ravaged the land. Three wild-talent mages, with the guidance of a lone Scion, summoned potent magics and commanded the ground to swallow the dragons

for all time. The dragons were defeated, but magic ran wild and thousands died. The three mages, fearful for their lives, called upon their gods. The tower in which they stood was taken from Krynn to the Beyond. It became the Lost Citadel.

**2645-2550 PC *Magic Defends Itself.*** The three lost mages created the laws of magic. They guided their brethren to build five bastions of magic in remote regions to shelter all mages. Thus, the Towers of High Sorcery were built.

**2640 PC *Thoradin Closed.*** Ashamed for causing the Second Dragon War, the dwarves withdrew from the rest of the world. Thoradin's gates were closed.

**2600 PC *The Rise of Ergoth.*** Ackal Ergot united Khalkist barbarians after the war to build their own kingdoms. They pil-

laged the abandoned ogre homes and, with their booty, founded Ergoth.

**2600 PC *Hylo Founded.*** The second kender nation was founded when an entire kender clan was trapped in the first floating citadel. It crashed against the Sentinel Mountains in northwest Ansalon.

**2500-2200 PC *Ergoth Dominant.*** The nation of Ergoth stretched from the southern Kharolis Mountains to the northern shore. These brutal barbarians tried to learn the ways of civilization. Skirmishes broke out with dwarven neighbors and an uneasy truce resulted. Ergoth expanded to the borders of Silvanesti and trade began with elves. Some elves intermarried with humans.

**2515 PC *Death of Silvanos.*** The venerable elf Silvanos died and was buried in a crystal tomb. His son Sithel assumed command and ordered the construction of a tower, the Palace of Quinari, in memory of his father. All Silvanesti counted their leader's death as the end of an age.

**2150-2000 PC *Thorbardin Delved.*** Hill dwarves migrated to the southern Kharolis Mountains and, after a time, began delving a new home. Thoradin was in decline, becoming isolated from the outside world.

**2308 PC *Sithas and Kith-Kanan born.*** Twin sons were born to Sithel. Sithas was the older by minutes, followed by Kith-Kanan.

**2192 PC *Sithel is Slain.*** Sithel journeyed to the outpost of his son Kith-Kanan to assess the half-elf problem. Sithel was accidentally slain by humans hunting on the western border of Silvanesti. The Kinslayer War began.

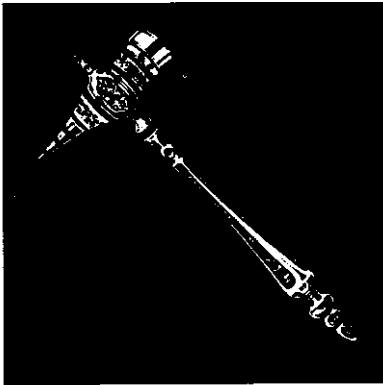


**2192-2140 PC *Kinslayer War.*** Elves tried to drive humans from their border, while humans resisted fiercely. Half-elves were forced to take sides, brother fighting brother. Kith-Kanan led the elven war effort, and was pushed into killing his kin. Finally, Kith-Kanan negotiated a truce with Ergoth.

**2140-2100 PC *Sundering of Silvanesti.*** Western elves, ashamed by the bloodshed they had caused with their brother elves, sued for social change and self-determination. The western Silvanesti declared their independence.

**2128-2073 PC *War of the Mountain.*** Border disputes between Thorbardin and Ergoth resulted in skirmishes.

**2073 PC *Swordsheath Scroll.*** Kith-Kanan engineered the signing of the Swordsheath Scroll, a peace treaty between the elves, dwarves, and Ergoth. Elves were granted a large enchanted forested area as a buffer between dwarves and humans. The land was renamed Qualinesti, and was populated by the discontented western elves. Kith-Kanan was their leader. Ergoth agreed to stop mining the Kharolis Mountains and the dwarves relaxed trade restrictions.



**2072 PC** *Hammer of Kharas is forged.* Thorbardin dwarves forged the Hammer of Kharas, a mortal artifact made in the image of the immortal Hammer of Reorx. They presented this greatest dwarven gift to Ergoth as an offering of peace. The Hammer reinforced the peace.

**2050-2030 PC** *The Great March.* Western elves of Silvanesti migrated to the new homeland of Qualinesti.

**2009 PC** *Thoradin is Lost.* None could find the gates of the great city of Thoradin. It was lost to time.

#### *age of Right 2000-1000 pc (knights of Solamnia)*

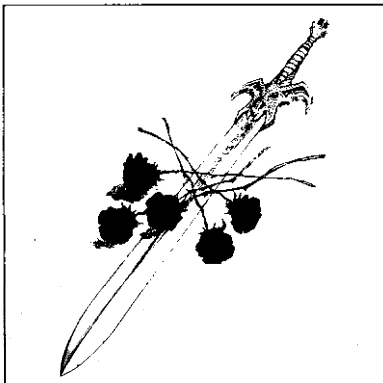
**2000-1900 PC** *Peace and Pax Tharkas.* Ergoth and all nations prospered. Kith-Kanan strengthened the peace by convincing men, dwarves, and elves to join together to erect the fortress of Pax Tharkas. This fortress became a monument to the peace. The benign and just reign of the Quevalin line began in Ergoth.

**1900-1750 PC** *Rebellions in the East.* The end of the Quevalin line in Ergoth brought brutal kings who sought to exploit the kingdom. After much abuse and taxation, the eastern counties revolted. Small but brutal battles crushed all resistance.

**1812 PC** *Vinas Solamnus Commands imperial Guard.* Skilled commander, Vinas Solamnus, assumed the most important military post in the nation of Ergoth.

**1801 PC** *Great Uprising in Vingaard.* Solamnus marched east with a huge army to crush a rebellion in the lands of Vingaard.

**1800 PC** *Year of Waiting.* Solamnus reviewed the rebels' cause, trying to avoid another massacre. He discovered that the corrupt Ergothian empire had driven the desperate people to rebel. Solamnus and most of his army joined the rebel forces.



**1799-1791 PC** *Rose Rebellion and Fall of Ergoth.* Nations of eastern Ergoth rallied to Solamnus as their savior. Patiently, Solamnus trained an army while turning back Imperial forces. In 1791 PC, Solamnus marched south to Daltigoth, outmaneuvering Ergothian forces and laying siege to the capital. The emperor finally sued for peace, granting the eastern states independence. Solamnus honored the Swordsheath Scroll with the dwarves and elves.



**1775 PC** *Knights of Solamnia formed.* After his Quest for Honor, ruler Vinas Solamnus founded an order of knights who would fight for the cause of Good. The order was inspired by Paladine, Kiri-Jolith, and Habbakul—three gods of Good. The Crown, Sword, and Rose Knights of Solamnia became the

guardians of the world.

**1750-1300 PC** *Birth of Nations.* Sancrist, Solamnia, and Istar arose from independent city-states. Solamnia prospered and Ergoth declined. The Silvanesti retired from the world.

**1480 PC** *Mar Grows as Trade Center.* Istar grew from a confederation of city-states in the east. Unaffected by the recent wars, Istar became a nexus for world trade.

Solamnia became the major military power, and the world looked to it to safeguard the peace.

**1399-1010 PC** *The Dark Queen Plots.* With her dragon children buried, the Dragon Queen began a new plot. Calling on the aid of the lizard people, she seeded the mines of Thoradin with dragon eggs, which folk believed to be rare gems. Collectors bought the eggs, which hatched in their possession. The owners were devoured by the wyrmlings. Over 350 years, these eggs seeded wyrmlings across the globe. By the time they were discovered, hundreds of mature dragons had returned to Krynn.



**1060-1018 PC** *The Third Dragon War.* The dragonarmies unleashed their fury, first attacking and conquering small borderlands, but finally turning toward Solamnia. The Good folk of Ansalon endured the attacks from the skies, barely clinging to life. Ansalon hung in the balance.



**1020-1018 PC** *Huma Dragonbane.* The Young Solamnic knight Huma Dragonbane met and fell in love with Gwynneth, a mysterious elf woman who was really the silver dragon, Heart. With the guidance of Paladine, they forged the first true dragonlance and rode into battle.



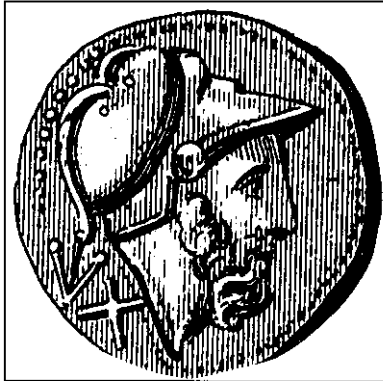
Their victories rallied the other Good dragons; they produced more lances. At last, Takhisis herself fell before the enchanted weapon, and she agreed to retire from Krynn, taking all other dragons with her. Huma and Gwynneth died as Takhisis departed.

The Bakali—the lizard people—were not seen again.

**age of might: 1000-0 pc (age of The false god)**

**1000 PC Hylo Allies With Solamnia.** Thorbardin reopened Thoradin by driving occupying ogres out of the delvings. With the nearness of Istar, Thoradin became a major supplier of metals, coins, and tools.

**1100-800 PC Istar Dominant.** Istarian trade standards spread throughout the world. Istar became the moral center of the world.



**980 PC Thorbardin Opens Kayolin.** In gratitude for their help during the Third Dragon War, Solamnia granted the dwarves of Thorbardin mining rights in the Garnet Mountains. The dwarves delved the city of Garnet and set up a kingdom there. They called their provincial kingdom Kay-Olin.

**967-948 PC Thorbardin Constructs Tree of Life.** Thorbardin began construction of Zakhalex, the Tree of Life, and Hillow, an outlying hill dwarf kingdom. Silvanesti and Qualinesti became more isolationist after the war.

**910-870 PC Ogres Return to Thoradin.** Exiled ogres united to flush the foreign dwarves from the halls of Thoradin. The Thoradin dwarves called on their Solamnic allies to drive the ogres away.

**850-727 PC Trade Wars.** Istar aggressively imposed and enforced trade standards on neighboring nations, including the kender of Balifor. The riled kender began a trade war. After years of attempted military actions and lawsuits against the kender, Istar admitted defeat and signed an agreement known as the "Kender Tax," exempting them from taxes and trade standards.

**673-630 PC Istar and Silvanesti Clash.** Istar expansion threatened Silvanesti naval merchants. Several sea skirmishes resulted in blockading of Istarian ports. With the aid of Solamnia as peacemakers, the elves persuaded Istar to add its signature to the Swordsheath Scroll. This signing was called Elfmeld.

**530-522 PC Ogre Wars/Dwarf Meld.** Ogres from the Khalkists threatened trade routes among Istar, Thoradin, and Solamnia. The dwarves of Thoradin united with Istar and the Knights to drive back the invaders. The dwarves added their signature to the Swordsheath Scroll with Istar.

**490-476 PC Barbarian Raiders/Great Meld.** Solamnia became more dependent on Istarian trade, currency, and ideals. Repeatedly, they joined the eastern nation in alliance. Barbarian tribes in the Estwilde, resenting the Istarian trade routes, raid-

ed caravans. Istar branded the barbarian tribes as "pagans, brigands, and villains." Solamnia joined Istar in warring against the barbarians. Solamnia resigned the Swordsheath Scroll with Istar.

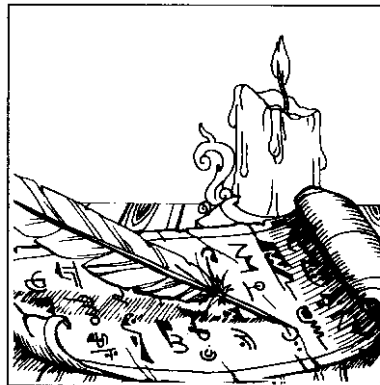
**460 PC Peace in the Land.** Istar reigned as the center of commerce, tax, and art.



**280 PC Istar Declares World Righteousness.** Claiming to be the moral center of the world, Istar set up its first Kingpriest. Solamnia approved the effort to promote Goodness throughout the lands. Silvanesti grew increasingly antagonistic toward the arrogance of Istar. Few others noted the signs of doom.

**260-212 PC Temple of the Kingpriest Built.** The finest artisans in Krynn went to Istar to build the Kingpriest a temple that would proclaim the glory of Istar.

**250-100 PC Corruption of justice—Elves Shun.** Istar began to repress independence and anyone who did not agree with the policies and divinity of the Kingpriest. The elves, reaching a breaking point in their disgust with the arrogance of humans, withdrew into their forests and barred commerce with the outside world.



**118 PC Proclamation of Manifest Virtue.** The Kingpriest declared that Evil in the world was an affront to both gods and mortals. A rigid list of evil acts was created and those guilty of offenses faced execution or duty in the gladiatorial arena. Priests of Istar began to lose access to high-level spells. These priests became

the Kingpriest's enforcement squad.

**80-20 PC Dominance of Istar Clergy.** Istar claimed itself the center of religion, and all aspects of Istarian life required the approval of the priesthood. While the status of Istarian clergy rose, wizards were hunted as ungodly and uncontrolled. The priesthood lost all of its miraculous abilities.

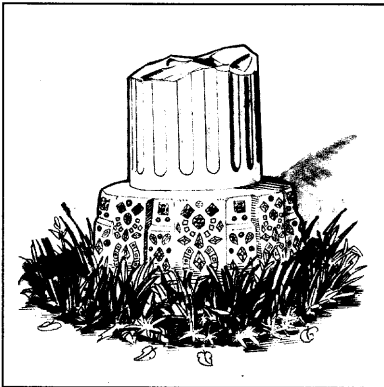
**19 PC Siege on Sorcery.** Urged on by the Kingpriest, the people of Krynn laid siege to the Towers of High Sorcery in the Lost Battles. Two of the towers nearly fell into the hands of the uninitiated. Unwilling that novices should unleash the fury of magic, mages destroyed the two towers. Fearful of rampant, unordered magic wielders that might arise if all five towers were destroyed, the Kingpriest granted the mages safe passage to exile if they left the remaining towers intact. The Kingpriest took the Tower of Istar for his abode.

**6 PC *Edict of Thought Control.*** The Kingpriest asserted that evil thoughts equated to evil deeds. The priesthood used renegade mages to cast *ESP* spells at random on all Istarian subjects. A reign of terror and degeneration ensued.



**0 *Cataclysm.*** The Kingpriest tried to elevate himself to godhood and command the other gods. He used their gifts to the world to control them. The gods were wrathful. True priests disappeared from the world. The gods sent thirteen signs to warn the people of the coming Cataclysm. The Solamnic Knight

Lord Soth, although given the chance to save Krynn from the Cataclysm, refused. On the thirteenth day of Yule, the third of the new year, the sky burned and a fiery mountain fell from the heavens. It dragged Istar to the depths of the ocean.



**1-300 AC *Shadow Years.*** The world was reshaped. New mountains arose; elder mountains fell; seas rushed in. Famine and plague spread across the world. Krynn became a place of distrust and hatred. Every fallen race blamed others for the world's pain. All Good priests, knights, and mages went into hiding.

**3-140 AC *The Dark Queen Finds Istar.*** The Temple of Istar was not destroyed, but gated to the Infernal Realms where Takhisis found it. For years she pondered the possibilities, sending agents abroad through Krynn to gauge the opportunities in the world.

**39 AC *Dwarfgate Wars.*** The men and hill dwarves of Xak Tsaroth fled southward, seeking refuge in Thorbardin. The mountain dwarves barred their gates and turned back the refugees with sword and spear. Then the evil mage Fistantilus built the magical fortress of Zhaman in the shadow of the mountains. From there, he waged war on Thorbardin. When at last his defeat was certain, he obliterated his tower with spell power, forming Skullcap.

**141 AC *The Stone is Planted.*** Using the Foundation Stone from the ruined Temple of Istar, Takhisis opened a gateway back to Krynn. She carried the Stone from the Blood Sea and planted it in the remote vale of Neraka. There, it grew into a dark version of the Temple of Istar.

**142-152 AC *Dragons Awakened.*** For ten years, the Dark Queen wandered the lands in disguise. She delved into the remote netherlands and depths of Krynn to find and awaken the Evil dragons and prepare them for her dark work. Then

she returned to Neraka and, from there, to her home in the Infernal Realms in the Abyss.



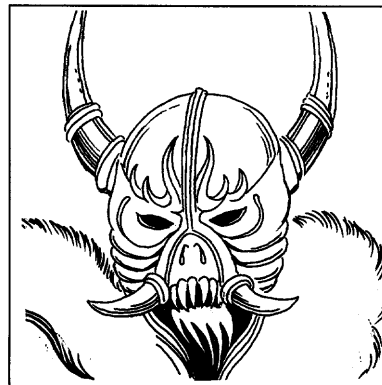
**157 AC *Berem Finds the Stone.*** The young hunter Berem and his sister Jasla discovered the Foundation Stone. Berem coveted the gems in the stone and pried one loose. Jasla counselled him against it. They struggled and Jasla struck her head on the Foundation Stone. She died. Fearing discovery, Berem fled with the gem hidden in a pocket of his tunic. The gem bonded with the man's flesh, becoming imbedded in his chest. Jasla's spirit was drawn into the Foundation Stone, occupying the void left when Berem stole the stone.

**210 AC *Takhisis finds the Gate Barred.*** Because the Foundation Stone stood incomplete, Takhisis could no longer use it as a gate. Her sleepless senses searched through the land to discover the reason for the stone's disfunction. She soon tracked down Berem and learned of his capricious acts.

**287 AC *Dragon Eggs Stolen.*** Evil dragons raided the homes of Good dragons and stole their eggs. They hid the eggs beneath the flaming mountains called the Lords of Doom.

**296 AC *The Oath.*** Takhisis awakened the Good dragons and presented them with an ultimatum. They would remain out of the coming war that Takhisis had planned, or have their precious eggs crushed. Knowing they could not hatch such a store of eggs for another century, the Good dragons swore noninvolvement in the coming war. Takhisis promised the return of their eggs once the war had concluded.

**300-320 AC *Agents of Evil.*** Takhisis sent secret minions and worshippers to search for the gemstone man. She needed him to complete the Foundation Stone so that she could re-enter the world. Berem fled from Takhisis, entering Tarsis and Barter and Thorbardin. In the last of these, he was caught by Daergar and thrown in a dungeon to rot. But the gem sustained Berem for nearly fifty years in the dark. In those dungeons, not even the Dark Queen could find him.



**332-340 AC *Dragons Gather; Dragonlords Made.*** At their queen's direction, the Evil dragons formed an holy alliance with wicked men and ogres. These barbaric men and brutal ogres became the dragons' commanders and masters. The Highlords, as they were called, proved as willing and able to torture their own forces as those they conquered.

**337 AC Sanction and Estwilde Corrupted.** The blight of darkness in Neraka verged into the neighboring nations. Takhisis established the lava-besieged town of Sanction as her major port city. The Evil humans and humanoids of Estwilde became reluctant reserves for the Dark Queen's armies.

**341 AC Dragonarmies Offer Alliance.** The dragonarmies offered alliance to the lands of Kern, Khur, Blode, and the Pirate Isles, an offer they swiftly accepted, knowing refusal meant death.



later.

**343-347 AC Evil Marshals its Forces.** Takhisis and her generals trained their army of human rogues and cutthroats, goblins, hobgoblins, and ogres. Violence occurred among the allies of Evil, fights that weeded out the weak. At last Takhisis judged her troops ready.

**348 AC War of the Lance Begins.** In spring, the Dragonarmies poured eastward from the Khalkist mountains to overrun Nordmaar and Balifor and to threaten lands beyond. Silvanesti accepted emissaries of the Highlords, who swore that the elves need not worry for the safety of their lands.

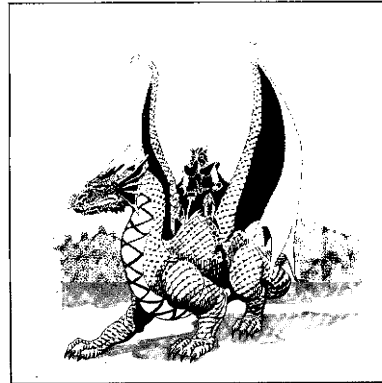


**349 AC Silvanesti Betrayed.** Flushed with victories, the dragonarmies turned south on a "routine patrol" and attacked Silvanesti's northern border. Losses were heavy on both sides. Elves lured their foe into ambush. Takhisis committed the rest of her troops to the battle and the forest border was ravaged. Supplies low,

the elves retreated to Silvanost, where they stood a good chance of outlasting the siege.

However, King Lorac of the Silvanesti had become enchanted by the Dragon Orb of Istar, an artifact he had rescued from the lost city before the Cataclysm. Lorac ordered the evacuation of Silvanesti. The elves fled in ships, heading for Solamnia and Qualinesti. On the last day of the year, the dragonarmies reached the edge of Silvanost. Then, Lorac commanded the Orb to destroy the dragons. However, Viper, the Evil spirit residing in the Orb, seized control of Lorac. The elven king's mind went mad. The Dragon Orb projected Lorac's nightmares out into the land he loved. Silvanesti became a spiralling nightmare. The dragonarmy abandoned its conquest, which had grown worthless and corrupt.

**350 AC Evil Rearms Itself.** Licking their wounds, the dragonarmies rebuilt their forces from the Evil folk they had conquered. Takhisis controlled all of eastern Ansalon, save Saifhum. The minotaurs of Mithas and Kothas harried the retreating Silvanesti refugees.



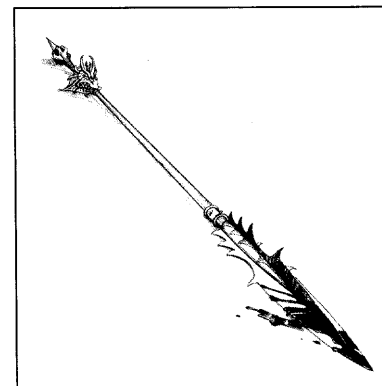
Nightlund. They pressed the borders of the Plains of Solamnia and Gaardlund.

Lemish betrayed humankind, opening a door in the south for the dragonarmies to enter Solamnia. The dwarves of Kayolin, however, proved an insurmountable bulwark against the advancing dragonarmies.

By autumn, the Knights responded and Solamnia became entrenched. The Red Army led an amphibious flanking assault along New Sea and across the Plains of Abanasinia. The barbarians fell to their advance and the war verged upon Qualinesti.

The Qualinesti elves fled to join their cousins in Southern Ergoth, but not until first delaying the foe's advance. The dragonarmies marched against the dwarven kingdom of Thorbardin, laying siege to its northern gate.

A wing of the Blue Army then struck south around New Sea to Tarsis and the Plains of Dust. They marched then toward Kharolis to cut off all retreat for the dwarves. By year's end, much of Ansalon had fallen beneath the dragons' shadow.



**352 AC Whitestone Council.** Representatives of the surviving nations gathered on Sancrist at Whitestone Glade and forged an uneasy alliance. The secret of the dragon lances was rediscovered and these supreme weapons began to be forged anew.

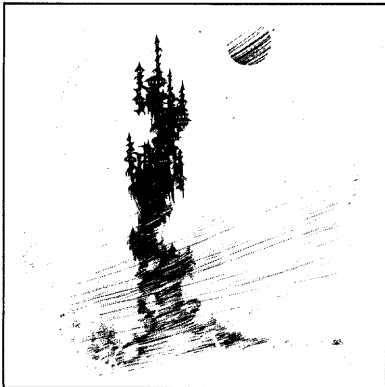
With the arrival of spring, the Blue Dragonarmy besieged the High Clerist's Tower in Palanthus. They were repelled by the Knights, using the new-forged dragonlances for the first time.

A special force made a surprise stab at Sanction and discovered the blackmail that kept the Good dragons out of the war. With the aid of the silver dragon D'Argent and the copper dragon Cymbol, the special force rescued the Good dragon eggs. The Good dragons swiftly entered the war.

In the summer, the armies of Whitestone began to strike back. They reclaimed much of fallen Solamnia. The dragonarmies responded by bringing five flying castles into the battle. But already the dragon alliances and conquests were slipping away. The siege of Kalaman by Whitestone forces

marked the beginning of the end.

Released from years of imprisonment in the dwarven kingdoms, Berem, the gemstone man, was sighted again. Takhisi moved agents to find and capture him. Thus, she might open the gates of the Infernal Realms and bring her armies of dread to reinforce the flagging dragonarmies. But Berem constantly evaded her best efforts.



In a desperate ploy, Whitestone forces marched across the Estwilde and assaulted the vale of Neraka, stronghold of Takhisi's might. The Heroes of the Lance, by Fate's hand, found Berem and journeyed to Neraka. As Evil rallied its forces around the crippled form of the dark Temple, Berem reunited the

gem with the Foundation Stone. Whole, at last, but now inextricably linked with Jasla, the Temple healed itself. Then, as Jasla's spirit fled the stone, the Temple crumbled. Takhisi's gateway was destroyed.

Evil turned in on itself. The weak alliances of Evil fought over the dropped crown of rulership. The War of the Lance faltered to an end.

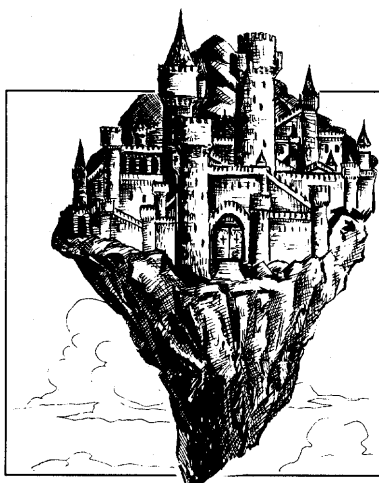
**353 AC *The War of the Lance Ends.*** The former armies of the Dark Queen fragmented and fled to remote regions of Ansalon. The dragons, in their retreat, entered lands with climates harsh to them. They grew weakened.

**353-357 AC *Harrying the Foe.*** The Whitestone forces continued to scour the land, driving out the last pockets of darkness. Even after the last pockets of resistance disappeared, the dragonarmies still occupied large regions of central, eastern, and southern Ansalon.



**356 AC *The Master of Past and Present.*** Raistlin Majere and his brother Caramon used a time-travel device to journey into the past. They reached the corrupted Istar, intent on changing history and challenging the Dark Queen herself. Raistlin became one with Fistandantilus. He journeyed through

the years and into the Abyss, hoping to defeat the Dragon Queen.



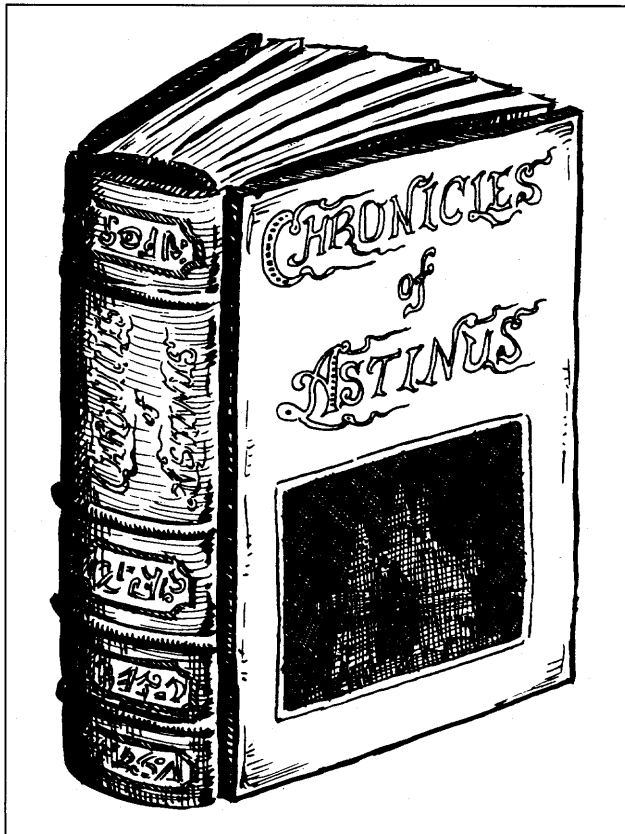
fort was doomed. The Blue Lady and

**357 AC *The Blue Lady's War.*** The Blue Lady, one of the most powerful and ruthless Dragon Highlords, made an unholy pact with the death knight, Lord Soth. Together, they led a dragonarmy from Neraka and, with a flying citadel above, attacked northern Solamnia. They besieged even Palanthus, but the effort was defeated.



**358 AC *Sealing the Gates of Hell.*** Raistlin Majere made the ultimate sacrifice to bar the return of Dark Queen Takhisi. In order to seal the gates of the Abyss, Raistlin surrendered his own life. His brother, Caramon, and all the Heroes of the Lance grieved the loss of the great mage.

**358-369 AC *Changing of the Guard.*** A new generation of Knights worked to reclaim the peace and aid in rebuilding of the wounded nations. The Heroes of the Lance were replaced by youthful counterparts.





## history of KRYNN



Many years have been spent compiling this paper for the enlightenment of the world. Numerous scribes spent countless hours poring over yellowed manuscripts, ancient scrolls, and record disks. The newly found clay tablets of Khur, with their old-world Istarian record of time, have also informed this document. While this work is far from completed-and perhaps may never be finished-it is the best effort of Ansalon's brightest minds in this present age. Only Astinus of Palanthus politely declined a request for aid in this work. But Astinus did agree, with a faint smile, to open the annals of the great Library.

We have worked to be accurate and open-minded about each discovery and enlightenment along the way. Whenever we had cause to believe that traditional histories had erred on some point or other, we were cautious about such assumptions. In some extreme cases, we chose to record these new insights into Ansalonian history. The reader may accept or reject

them at will. We hope not to offend anyone's sense of past events, but would like to remind readers that history is not an exact science. Histories result from the interpretation of past events using one's own experiences and prejudices.

Many of the revelations and revisions present in this document arise from two previously unknown sources. The *Knights Annals*, recently found in Huma's tomb in Southern Ergoth, detail the history of the Knights through the early years of the Age of Might. Likewise, the clay tablets of Istar, discovered in sunbaked Khur, shed light on Istarian history from the Age of Light through 200 PC.

Before beginning the history proper, we wanted to investigate the origin and past of arguably the most historical figure in Ansalon: Astinus of Palanthus.

### Astinus, Scholar and Mystery

Speculation abounds on just who the mysterious scholar Astinus of Palanthus is. Certainly since the time of the Cataclysm, he has been with us. Some tales even tell of times before the Cataclysm when he lived, forever ensconced in the musty Libraries of Palanthus. And none foresee his demise in the near future. He seems ever the same, ageless man. An uninformed rumor claims even that Astinus is eternal, immortal, or one of the gods (perhaps Zivilyn, who is said to have branches in every realm, or Gilean the master of knowledge). Rumors aside, the following account records what we, as scholars, have deduced.

There was indeed a time when Astinus was not around. No records are known of his presence during the Age of Dreams, and indeed his own Iconochronos references the works of scholars more ancient than he: the historian Pakafhas, the elven bard Quevalin Soth, and the first king of Istar, Karthay Pah.

Further, we know that Astinus possesses the *globe of present* time passing, a mystic artifact given to him by the Master of Past and Present. With a hand on this globe, one can travel the face of the world in spirit form, searching out the bravest deeds and recording the acts of greatness that weave the tapestry of history. Clearly, this is what Astinus has done.

Our research further speculates that Astinus's mastery of history and his iron will allow him to use this mystic globe to walk even the River of Time. Thus, Astinus has viewed past events as if they were present. The more distant the event, however, the more uncertain that Astinus's spirit can find its way back to his mortal shell. To our knowledge, none but Astinus has used this device in such a fashion, and he has explored only a millennium or two from his current time. Even so, the use of such a device would explain his detailed histories from before the Cataclysm as well as the apocryphal sightings of Astinus a millennium ago.

Three other theories may explain Astinus's longevity. (He, himself, declines comment.) First, there are those who believe he is god-touched, the right hand of one of the old gods of Krynn (Zivilyn or Gilean). Such speculators appear unable to believe that a mere mortal could accomplish what Astinus has. Perhaps they are correct.

Second, some hold that Astinus is not a person, but an office, filled in serial fashion by one historian after another. Tales tell that during the Age of Dreams, a race of scholarly dragons called the Astini existed. Some claim that Astinus shares dragon blood, and is therefore somehow eternal. Perhaps he shares an office with a dynasty of dragon-blooded men.

The third theory is ours. We have observed that Astinus appears ageless. We have never seen him with a beard or facial hair and suspect he has none. This leads us to believe that he is either elven or shares elven blood (the latter is more likely, for we detect no hint of pointed ears). If he shares the blood of that incredibly long-lived race, his seeming immortality might be explained, along with his preference for solitude and his unending patience with the slow progress of time.

Whatever the truth, Krynn and our meager efforts would be impoverished without the works of this renowned historian.

### The Creation of KRYNN

Before the beginning was Chaos-without form, without purpose. A maddening silence blanketed the swirling mists.

Into that Chaos there entered thought, and with thought, being. And there was the High God. And the thoughts multiplied. There were many, but the many were one. The High God moved through the Chaos, and patterns grew where there were none, forms took shape in the formlessness, purposes imbued the meaninglessness. The One-Who-Was-Many determined to make it so, and accordingly, the High God formed plans. He and She fashioned words and thoughts and held them in their mind. When at last the work was done, the High God turned to find those who would help in creation.

The High God called into the Beyond, speaking words from the plan of creation. There came an answer. Two beings responded: one of light, one of darkness. Twined and inseparably linked they were, two halves of a whole. These gods, who



were lesser creatures in the Beyond, answered the call that they might be greater. They were to be the Mother and Father of the new creation, the King and Queen of glory. They were Paladine and Takhisis.

Yet as the High God gazed on them, he saw their eternal clash: though neither could live without the other, they pulled and tugged as if to consume each other. The High God pondered: To whom should the plans for creation be given? Neither of the lesser gods was whole. The High God needed a balance to fill the void between the two, to keep them from consuming each other and the creation to be.

The High God searched through the realities: they searched the Void; he searched Time; she searched Space; they strove to find one who was balanced, who could let the plan fill his or her being and be all. And, searching through the depths of time, the High God found one such creature. Only one in all time and space was so suited. He was a creature, not a god, but he had godly potential.

Out of Chaos and out of Time the High God summoned the scribe Gilean. To him the plans for creation were given, the plans called the Tobril. And the creature became the plan, and the plan was all that he was. The knowledge of all creation made him a god.

Then seeing the task complete, the High God departed into the Void, into the realms beyond. The three other gods considered the plan and knew it was good and complete. But they needed help to build such a creation. So together they spoke the words and named the names, and this time many answered. There came Majere, who is hope and dream to the world; Chislev, who is nature; Sirrion, the transforming flame; Reorx, the forge; and Mishakal, who is life and compassion. The Dark Queen cast green eyes on the last, for she coveted the King for herself.

The new gods surveyed the sphere and the plan that was Gilean and they saw it was good and complete. But they knew not how to tame the Chaos. It was decreed that a new time and place would come to be. Time would begin again and the spirits would be created to live within the course of time.

Then Reorx, greatest of the companion gods, said, "I will

reshape the Chaos for us, and all will help. Give of yourselves and I will fashion a tool." So, from the godstuff, Reorx shaped a mighty hammer. With this hammer, he smote the Chaos. And it slowed. Again and again he struck the Chaos. With the fires of Sirrion he reshaped it. And as he worked, sparks flew from the hammer and lighted the sphere. And there were stars.

Then, Reorx fashioned a home for the gods, one for each and for those who would come later. These became the constellations, the planets, and the moons. Then, he fashioned the world, hammering out the ball that was to be Krynn. He formed it and hung it in the heavens to cool.

Then, the other gods joined the Creation. Together, Paladine and Takhisis guided Reorx in the shaping of the lands, separating the lands and seas, the light and dark, the heavens and earth. Then the companion gods gifted the world. Chislev brought forth the plants and forests of the lands and seas. Sirrion granted the flora infinite diversity and change. Mishakal gave the plants beauty and made them fertile that they might multiply. And Majere gave them order and purpose that they might enrich the world.

Paladine said, "We need creatures to enjoy this world that we have made." So Chislev took the clay of the world, that these beasts might be one with the land, and fashioned creatures in the forms of the King and Queen of the gods. There were lizards and serpents and wyrms of every size and shape. Turtles and leviathans filled the seas. Great striders, toothy snappers, horned juggernauts, and gigantic grazers claimed the land. Winged gliders and feathered fliers took the skies. Then the gods rested.

## all Dragons War

The gods pondered which creature should have mastery over their world. Takhisis said, "Let us make rulers in our own image, that they might know their makers and obey us." "Yes," said Paladine, "Let us make them in our own image that they may know compassion and learn to love us." The two gods united. From their essence and their passions, Paladine drew forth colored strands of elemental fury. He weaved five spirits of exceeding power. Reorx crafted five shells made from the stone of Krynn, for the five children. He made their forms from the base metals of the earth: iron and copper, nickel and lead and tin. And into these shells the five were given form, and Mishakal made them fertile that they might multiply. But they were rebellious children, these dragons, all save the copper dragon, who was true and dutiful.

Then the gods sought to teach their dragon children about gods and the ways of gods. The gods created lizardmen, the bakali, to worship and obey the five, that they might better understand how to worship and obey the gods themselves. The world belonged to the five. It was an age of serpents and mighty lizards. Still the dragon children did not obey. So the gods chilled the lands and blighted the world, and many of the creatures died, that the five might learn loss. But Chislev and Sirrion, who grieved for their creations, taught their creatures the ways of fur and of fire. And the races of Krynn survived.

Now the Dark Queen regarded the spirits of her five children. She saw their strength of spirit and resolve. She witnessed their unfettered powers and coveted the five to be solely her own. And this covetousness became a hard place in her heart, a dark festering boil. When she lanced that boil, there stood a soul-sibling, a dark and hooded pustule. And the Dark Queen called him Morgion.

"Help me my sibling," she hissed. "Help me to make these five mine and mine alone." The darkened sibling nodded and smiled, for they shared their thoughts and minds. The Dark Queen went to the five dragon children and hissed lies in

their ears. "Your father fears your power. He would see you destroyed!" Morgion hovered in shadow and whispered, "Your father covets your glory. He would see you enslaved!"

The five dragons growled and snapped at the lies, feasting on the dark meat till it poisoned their hearts. "We are betrayed," they shrieked. "But he shall never enslave us; better to be cast out than to be so loathed by one's own parent." Morgion's dark hand seized their spirits and corrupted them. They all pledged allegiance to their mother, forsaking their father, save for the copper dragon, who argued for his king. Then, the dragon of nickel seduced her copper brother with a clever tongue. Then, too, did the copper dragon agree to follow his siblings into the darkness.

Morgion twisted and bent the spirits of the dragons, tarnishing and corrupting the metals from which they were made. And thus were born the chromatic dragons. Iron became rust red, hot with anger. Copper became blue as the cracking storm. Nickel turned green, venomous like the snake. Lead turned black, stained and marked with its tongue of acid. And tin turned white, the brittle bite of frost. The Dark Queen's wicked laughter echoed in the heavens. Hearing the laughter, Paladine discovered her handiwork. He was sorely aggrieved at the loss of his children. Cursing his queen's name, he retired for a time.

Majere, seeing Paladine's pain, devised a plan. He sent Reorx and Mishakal to comfort the king of gods. "Come, do not grieve," Reorx thundered, "I shall make a thing like no other to fill your grieving heart. I shall make for you five monuments to your five lost children, so you may remember who they are." "Yes, dear one," Mishakal whispered, "Together we will forge a miracle, that your loss shall be the universe's gain."

So together were forged five statues of precious metals—gold and silver, bronze and brass, and least of these, copper, who might have been redeemed save for the corrupting tongue of his sister. When Paladine saw what had been wrought, his heart leaped within. He was filled with love, and the sight of Mishakal quickened his love unto a raging bonfire. Then Reorx heated his hammer in that fire until it glowed white-hot. He struck the metal shells. The five monuments shivered and quaked and quickened into life. Thus, the five dragons were born in love, their passions refined and guided by their parents. So, the good dragons were born.

"Betrayed!" hissed the Dark Queen Takhisis. Her spittle melted an opening in the Void, and the two-headed serpent Hiddukel answered the summons. "This is unseemly, my queen. Your love, which is greater, has been slain. Call now my brother, who has been cast into the Void from the Beyond, for his devotion is true and undying." The Dark Queen spoke the words, and there came the goat-headed god of life's betrayal, and in his wake came the darkness of unlife. So entered Chemosh to Krynn, to build a steadfast army for his queen.

"Vengeance!" shrieked the Queen, and the universe grumbled. The land melted and out of the seething inferno there stepped a black god of hate. A new god. And in this volcanic being, the Dark Queen found her foul heart's desire. He was a consort of vengeance. He was Sargonnas.

"Let us wage war," he bellowed. And the Dark Queen echoed his cry. So war descended on the world of Krynn. Takhisis, her gods of Evil, and her Evil dragons fought Paladine, his gods of Good, and the Good dragons. The forces unleashed by this warfare were horrible to witness and they devastated the world of Krynn. Seas boiled. Forests burned. Land split asunder. The glorious creatures of Krynn died in droves, died for the grief of Paladine and jealousy of Takhisis. All were burned and swept away, save for those few who hid within the bosom of the world.

And when the gods saw the destruction they had wrought

upon their precious creation, they were pained. They ceased their struggles and withdrew to mend their aching hearts. Each went to his own: light to light, dark to dark, and gray to gray. And there, in their seclusion, they lived and counseled to restore what they had destroyed. New alliances were formed in that silent and empty time and new loves grew. From these loves came offspring to fill the void.

To Paladine and Mishakal were born twin brothers: Kiri-jolith, champion of justice, and Habbakuk, bounty of life. When the two were born, the song of creation swelled in beauty, and Habbakuk laughed. His laughter multiplied and filled the song, bringing to life Branchala, who would be Habbakuk's playmate and companion.

To Takhisis and Sargonnas was born the temperamental girl-child, Zeboim, mistress of tempests, weather, and dark seas. She was moody like her sire and violent like her dam.

Gilean, too, desired a companion, and so he spoke to his shadow for council and advice. With Chislev's aid, Gilean formed a brother and friend from his shadow. He was the tree of life, Zivilyn. And Chislev took Zivilyn as her consort.

Only Sirrion had no heart-mate. Determined to change this fact, he set to sculpting his ideal mate from the finest alabaster. He adorned his creation with precious metals and gems. When she was fully formed, he embraced her, and the fire in his bosom quickened the stone. Thus Shinare was born. But her industrious and pragmatic temper opposed that of the sculptor, Sirrion. They have fought to this very day.

Together with Zivilyn, Gilean engineered a treaty, a truce between the dark and the light. Through this truce, the gods rebuilt Krynn. Each god granted the reborn world a gift of his or her own, over which they alone had dominion. And so came the time of rebirth.

## all Saints War

The world was remade. Sargonnas burned away the debris, and Reorx reshaped the mountains and the valleys. Chislev robbed the land in a mantle of ochres and greens, trees and flowering plants and fruits of every kind. Habbakuk, to the strains of Branchala's music of life, crafted the creatures of the world from the wood of Chislev's trees and the soil of Krynn. He made birds for the sky and fish for the seas. Cattle and beasts of the wilds he made also. Then Majere touched the fallen leaves and twigs, animating them to become the gardeners of the world: the insects. Kiri-Jolith strengthened the creatures' hearts to make them strong to face adversity, and Mishakal blessed them so they would bear young. And Zeboim stirred the air with her storms, cleansing the lands and washing the ruin into her dark bosom.

Paladine shaped a light for the sky so plants could grow, whilst Takhisis made the black shawl of night so creatures could rest and resist the light. Gilean gave all things knowledge of themselves, and Zivilyn gave them the wisdom to use that knowledge. Yet three of the wicked gods did naught to strengthen the world. Instead, they created pain and suffering, which they said would teach the world obedience. Paladine did not turn back their gifts, for he saw that in adversity, the folk of Krynn would learn greatness. Morgion gave pain and sickness to the world, Hiddukel gave greed and pride, and Chemosh gave death. Even in these curses lay goodness, for the new mortality taught the creatures to cherish each moment of life.

To make sure the world would never again suffer the ravages of the All Dragons War, the gods weakened the dragons, requiring them to rest after they unleashed their destructive powers.

## Starbirth of Mortals

At last, when all was made, the gods fell silent. But across





the heavens arose the singing of a glorious choir. Then the gods saw that the stars themselves lived and were like unto the gods. Indeed they were pieces of the gods that had scattered from Reorx's hammer when he smote the Chaos.

And the gods forgot their oath not to war upon their world. They bickered over who might rule these star spirits. The gods of light wanted to nurture the spirits and teach them the paths of righteousness. The gods of dark wanted to make the spirits slaves who would bow down and worship. The gods of gray sought only a balance, to give to the spirits the chance and the wisdom to choose which path they would tread.

Sargonnas raged that the gods of darkness should never be challenged. Kiri-Jolith stood firm in defense of justice. And so the battle lines were drawn. Again war was waged in the heavens and upon Krynn. The winds and waves, frosts and fires wreaked great havoc upon the weary world. Only the return of the High God saved the world from a second destruction.

So awful was the damage that the gods of light and shadow were dismayed and heart-sore. They swore an oath even unto the High God to never again make war on the world.

The High God decreed a solution to the matter of the star spirits. Each family of gods would be permitted to give the star spirits one gift. The Gods of light and Good bestowed life, giving the spirits physical form that they might gain mastery over the world and become more like the gods themselves. The gods of light hoped that the spirits would bring peace and order to the world and take the path to righteousness.

The Gods of darkness and Evil bestowed the gift of mortality, so the spirits would hunger and thirst, toil and sweat, fall to illness and at last enter the grave. The gods of darkness hoped that the spirits would trade their freedom to Takhisis in exchange for the removal of their sufferings.

Lastly, the Gods of gray and Neutrality gave the spirits the gift of free will. Thus the spirits could choose freely which path to follow. The gods of Neutrality hoped thereby that the star spirits would maintain the Balance of the universe.

Then each family of gods fashioned the star spirits into their own peoples. The gods of Good fashioned the elves, forming

their bodies from the trees of the forests. Slender, individual, and long-lived, the elves were one with nature. They wielded the life power to reshape the land according to their will. The elven folk were formed to bring change to the world, but to change very little themselves.

The gods of Evil formed ogres from the bones of the world. These folk had the sturdiness, beauty, and coldness of stone. The ogres were formed to desire order and utter obedience, taking their orders from Takhisis and the gods of Evil.

The gods of Neutrality formed humans, casting them from the clay and waters of Krynn. Humans were malleable and impermanent. These short-lived folk had the greatest potential for Good or Evil, and the greatest freedom to choose between these. Their short lives upon Krynn made them quick to act, often without thinking. Humans gave motion to the pendulum of history, and thus formed a dynamic balance for the world.

And last, the High God formed the Children of Krynn—guardians of the beasts and of the world's bounties. The High God made centaurs and satyrs, pegasi and griffons, unicorns and chimerae. And these, too, had the freedom to decide their paths. They chose, as was their nature, to protect their lands.

And so, the balance was restored to the world, and Krynn as we know it came into being.

### *arrival of The Last gods*

But the Age of Starbirth did not end here, for three gods remained to be formed. To seal their agreement to nevermore make war upon Krynn, each family of gods agreed to create and raise a child who would become blood-brother to the child created by the other families. And because their wars had wounded Krynn, the gods agreed that these three blood-brothers would bless the world of Krynn by their creation. The blessing granted Krynn by the brother gods would be magic.

To Paladine and Mishakal was born a son of light, Solinari, who gained dominion over quiet and constructive magic. Meanwhile, from Gilean's majestic and beautiful thoughts sprang forth a daughter of Neutrality, Lunitari, who gained domain over illusion and reshaping magic. And last, from



Takhisis and Sargonnas, came a brother of darkness, Nuitari, who gained domain over commanding and destructive magic. This dark-haired child of Evil suffered from a throat impairment, which made him speak in hoarse whispers.

## age of dreams

When the people of Krynn were made they were scattered across the face of the world. Elves sought the enchanted forests for their homes, each to live in harmony with the land. Ogres claimed the lofty mountains and from that perch they sought to rule the world. But to humans fell the lowly and desolate plains-grass or sand or ice or sea. And there, exposed to the elements, they suffered and died.

Reorx stood alone and studied the people. Ogres wielded order and discipline, but lacked creativity. Elves wielded creativity and inspiration, but lacked drive and order. But humans, poor, suffering humans, held both creativity and industry when properly directed. Seeing this, Reorx gathered some humans to him and retired across the seas that he might teach them his craft and they might aid his work in the world. Under the heavy and ceaseless labors of Reorx, these humans became short and stout, a race named the Smiths.

Ogres sought to order themselves into vast and powerful empires. They gathered and enslaved the humans left on the plain to lend their hands and strong backs to the labors. Thus began the age of toil for humans, as they built the ogres' cities, homes, roads, and walls. From their forest lands the elves watched as ogre civilizations grew.

To ogres, order and obedience meant everything, and individual desire meant nothing. Each creature worked according to his capacity and received according to his stature. Any deviation from these principles threatened the fabric of society like a tumor that must be excised. For thousands of years, the ogres lorded it so.

## heresy of Igraine

Then came the Heresy of Igraine. Igraine was governor of the northern lands of Khal-Theraxian toward the end of the Age of Dreams, and he owned a man-slave named Eadamm. For countless years Igraine had remained steadfast in upholding the strict laws of slave ownership, executing many a human rogue without second thought. But Eadamm's disobedience was different. While Igraine inspected the mines one day with his daughter Everlyn, a tunnel collapsed around them. Igraine barely managed to escape, but his daughter was trapped beneath tons of rock. Sadly, Igraine ordered the closing and evacuation of the dangerous shaft, unwilling to risk his fortune in slaves for the life of his daughter.

But Eadamm, ignoring his master's orders, mustered his fellow slaves and braced the tunnels until beams could be brought down to reinforce them. Then together, the slaves rescued Everlyn. As the slaves did their work, Igraine held their angry foreman in check. Igraine had been oddly affected by the compassion of Eadamm, who would sacrifice himself to save his master's daughter.

When the rescue was complete, Eadamm was put in chains and taken to the royal manor. His disobedience required execution. But Igraine's heart had been wounded by the brave slave, and his eyes had been opened. He, too, had learned compassion. But by law he was required to execute the rogue. Igraine fulfilled the law, sentencing Eadamm to death at his whim. Thus, Eadamm would remain under the death sentence, but Igraine would never call for it to be carried out. Eadamm was released. He showed his gratitude by rallying his fellow slaves to double the output of the mines. Thus, Eadamm doubled the fortunes of Igraine.

To Igraine this was a major discovery: somehow independent choice led to greater commitment and prosperity. Per-

haps, he thought, the ogre nation had been mistaken to limit personal freedoms. Igraine relaxed his grip on his slaves, promoting individual effort. Igraine's fortunes doubled, tripled, and doubled again.

But, with freedom of choice came the desire for complete freedom. Unknown to Igraine, Eadamm had begun to organize the human slaves and make them loyal to him. Eadamm's influence spread to the neighboring estates and civil unrest exploded. The fortunes of Igraine's neighbors plummeted.

Igraine counselled his friends to allow their slaves more freedom. The advice worked for many, and a renaissance of business occurred. But one ogre who heard of "Igraine's Heresy" was outraged. He blamed Igraine directly for the riots and exposed Igraine's heresy to the High Council.

Twice, guard units demanded that Igraine leave his estate and surrender himself to ogre justice, and twice Igraine slew the messengers. When word came that the council planned to forfeit his lands and title and execute his family and friends, Igraine gathered those loyal to him and fled on ships to islands northeast of Ansalon. These fleeing ogres—the Irda—as they called themselves, dropped anchor on an unknown island that few have ever reached.

Just before departing the city, Igraine freed his slaves. This simple action sparked the end of the ogre nations. Eadamm and the men loyal to him were determined to buy time for their former master's escape. They armed themselves with picks and mauls, dug pits and built fortifications, laying a clever trap for the empire's troops. When the ogre armies descended, the slaves fought a bloody battle and emerged victorious. Few ogres lived to flee. The slaves then escaped into the hills.

For six long years Eadamm harried the kingdom, causing slave revolt after slave revolt. At last, at the battle of Persepholus, the empire's troops surrounded and decimated Eadamm's forces. The human hero was hamstrung and paraded for six days before his fellow slaves. Before the eyes of thousands of gathered slaves, Eadamm was drawn and quartered by four horses. To the ogres' utter dismay, the slaves rose up as a mob in response to the brutality and slew the ogres in the coliseum, every last one.

Over the next thousand years, humans distrusted any civilization. They doggedly harried the ogres, working to destroy their city-states. Humans, themselves, returned to barbarism.

## age of Light

The elves watched the decline of the ogre empires and suffered from the pillaging of the human barbarians. The woodland folk then decided to band together for mutual protection and support. The young elf, Silvanos, first suggested that elves become the successors to the fallen ogre kingdom. He inspired them to gather all they could from the ruins of the ogre cities and learn from the ogres' mistakes. Elven civilization, he announced, would be built on the needs of the individual and family. He proposed a communal democracy, in which all worked according to their ability and received according to their need. And every family would have a voice in the government of the land.

Scavenging from the abandoned cities of the ogre empire, the elves slowly began to build their version of civilization. And, in 4000 PC, the first year of the Age of Light, the first Sinthal-Elish (the Council of High Ones) was formed by Silvanos on the hill called Sol-Fallon. In that meeting, many elf clans and families swore an oath of allegiance to the principles of democracy and to Silvanos as their lord and leader. Balif, son of the second largest elf family and a close friend of Silvanos, was named lieutenant to Silvanos and leader of the united elven militia.

## The first Dragon War

At last united, the elves began to build a civilization in the southern enchanted forests. They created an island on which to build the city of Silvanost, capital of the proud nation, Silvanesti.

However, this enchanted forest and the southern ridge of the Khalkist Mountains were home to immortal dragons of darkness. The wyrms resented the intrusion. They slew any outposts created by the elves and threatened all in the area. Lord Silvanos and his lieutenant Balif rallied the elves, uniting them against their common foe.

Though the elves were long-lived, they were not immortal, as were the five chromatic dragons they fought. Many were the elves who fell before the withering breath of the dragons.

Aid came from an unguessed quarter when three brothers, dressed in robes of white, red, and black, offered a solution. They had been blessed with a visit from the three gods of magic. From the gods, they had learned how to create five runestones in which to capture the dragons' spirits and trap them for all time. To dispose of these runestones after the dragons were caught, however, the elves needed flying mounts. Thus, for the first time, the elves captured and tamed the vicious griffons, training them for war.

In "Song of Home Coming," the tale is told how the five dragons were lured back into the mountains and brought within range of the five *stones of lifetrapping*. There, the three mages captured their spirits in the stones. The dragon bodies turned into stony mountains. Then the elves rode their griffons north to a seeming bottomless pit in the mountains. One by one, they dropped each stone into the endless chasm. Thus, the dragon bodies and dragon stones lay countless leagues apart, beyond the reach of any mortal folk. The elves, victorious, returned to build their civilization.

In the year 3500 PC, the second Sinthal-Elish was held. Once again, the folk unanimously pledged their allegiance to Lord Silvanos and the nascent kingdom of Silvanesti. All the families of elves were granted fiefs of land in the forests and grasslands of Southern Ansalon.

But the gods were not pleased with the interference of the three gods of magic. And so, Solinari, Lunitari, and Nunitari were banished from Krynn, never again to disrupt the business of the world.

## Graystone of Gargath

The truth of the following tale is uncertain. It has been popularly accepted by gnomes and men as true, and kender find it amusing. Dwarves, however, vehemently deny its truth, claiming that they were the special children of Reorx. Dwarves believe they were purposefully forged by Reorx from a human mold, rather than being the random product of a mystical stone. Elves, for their part, remain peculiarly quiet on this topic.

In recognition of dwarven histories, the following tale meshes the dwarven treatise on this topic with the common stories. To avoid confusion, the forerunner race to dwarves and gnomes (and perhaps kender) is called the Smiths. (The works of Chisel Loremaster refer to these folk as "the Hammer Folk, People of the Hammer, the Forge Tenders, and Children of Reorx.")

After the creation of the world, Reorx gathered to him humans who worshipped the way of the hammer, who were filled with the drive to create. Together with Reorx, these humans departed to a northern land where they would be safe from war and where they could learn the crafts of Reorx. Over the centuries that followed, these humans changed into the ruddy-skinned, diminutive Smith folk.

The Smiths were gifted with Reorx's craft and they were the masters of metals, the forge, and machines. The marvels they



wrought in that dream age are but mere shadows in the world today. There were great wheeled iron wagons that traveled the land without draft beasts; there were winged craft and toys that capered and pranced without the power of magic; there were devices of all sorts that ran from elemental forces. Reorx was mightily proud of his people. But just as they learned craft from Reorx, they learned pride as well. The Smiths became haughty. And this distressed Reorx.

Meanwhile in the heavens, the exiled gods of magic plotted to return their gift of magic to the world of Krynn. The three approached the trickster god, Hiddukel, for his aid. He agreed to help the gods if they would enchant an item for him. The item was a coin of godly powers that would provide Hiddukel a conduit into the world of Krynn. The gods of magic agreed.

With his silken tongue prepared for guile, Hiddukel drew nigh to Chislev. "Do you feel the shift in balance?" he asked. "The ogres have fallen, the dragons have fallen. Soon all Evil must fall and the balance will be destroyed."

Chislev was made fearful by his words. She asked, "Is there nothing I can do to right this imbalance?" Hiddukel responded that if the three brother-gods of magic could escape their exile, the balance could be renewed. Chislev heard this and believed it in her heart.

To Reorx, then, Chislev flew. "Your fellow gods, the brothers of magic, miss the world from which they have been exiled—your perfect and beautiful world. None should be denied its beauty, certainly not the gods. Perhaps you might forge for them a remembrance of your grand creation to ease their grief."

Reorx heard the flattery and it sounded good to his ear. And so he crafted the Graystone, a thing of marvelous beauty. It was a perfect model of Krynn. And to the gods of magic he bestowed the stone.

On the moon Lunitari, the brother-gods of magic received the stone. There, they imbued the Graygem with their essences. Then, Hiddukel again drew nigh to Reorx.

"Ah my friend, I fear you have been tricked. The Graygem, your gift to the brothers three, is being imbued with magical powers, powers that threaten all the gods. And there is naught you can do since you gave the gift freely."

"What are we to do?" questioned the Forger.

"Ah, perhaps there is a way to avert this disaster," replied the Trickster. "What you freely gave, you cannot revoke. But if another were to steal the Graygem, perhaps a mortal who is

beyond the influence of the brother-gods, Krynn may yet be saved."

"You have such a mortal in mind?" the Hammer asked.

"Perhaps, but you know my dilemma. I can do nothing without a price."

"Name the price and I shall render it to you, if this thing can be done," said the unwary Reorx.

"Very well. I would have you forge me three items: a dagger, a coin, and a circlet. They should be simple items, elegant and functional."

"Done," said Reorx.

"Good. The mortals I have in mind are your own Smiths. They have asked me to intercede with you on their behalf."

"What do these mortals seek?"

"Oh great creator, they seek only to follow in your footsteps as creators, to build a great god-tool."

"Then I will inspire them to create a Great Machine," Reorx replied.

"But for this Great Machine to work, the Smiths need your Graygem. They have a vehicle that will climb to Lunitari where your prize is stored. They can then steal the Graygem from the unwary brother-gods of magic."

And so it came to pass. Reorx granted the Smiths a vision of the Great Machine that would be powered by the Graygem. As the rest of the Smiths labored to complete the Great Machine, Reorx showed the lowest of the Smiths, Milgas Kadwar, where the Graygem was hidden on Lunitari.

Milgas then took a sky-hook ladder to climb to the moon. He hooked the end onto the ether, climbed up, then swung the ladder up overhead and hooked the other end onto the ether. In this way he climbed until he reached the moon. With a magical net given to him by Hiddukel, Milgas captured the Graygem and descended back to Krynn. But when he reached Krynn, the Graygem awoke and sped away from the Great Machine. A web of chaotic wild magic trailed the Graystone. As the stone passed, it warped the world and its folk and laced Krynn with powerful bands of magic. Thus did magic return to Krynn.

Every creature touched by the Graystone was altered into a form that reflected the creature's true nature. Stubborn ogres became bull-headed minotaurs, mariner elves became sea elves, dowdy Smiths became dwarves, scatterbrained Smiths became gnomes, and so, too, came the kender and goblins into the world.

The folk of Krynn were sore afraid. They sought to slay the clan of Smiths who had brought this terror to their shores. But the brother-gods did not want their unwitting accomplices harmed. So the Graygem touched one group of Smiths, transforming them so that they might defend themselves. Outwardly, their hair turned silver and their pates balded, their beards curled and their eyes became golden as the sunset. Inwardly, they became magic itself, a living embodiment of the wild magic of the Graystone. And they were called Scions.

To the Scions fell the task of saving their people. Divinations warned them of their impending doom. Taking the warning to heart, they became a driven people. Almost overnight, great barges were constructed upon the bay. Meanwhile, the dwarven mages made the land rise, forming ridges to slow the advancing armies. Then, when all was ready, the Smiths boarded the twelve and twenty craft they had made and departed from their shores. They fled south toward Ansalon even as Igraine had fled north from it. And before them went the Graystone.

Although the Scions summoned favorable winds and the bounty of the seas, still were they hated and feared by the Smith folk, who shunned the supernatural. They left during the spring floods and storms. Barge after barge foundered and sank, taking all the relatives and friends thereon to a wa-

tery grave. At last, as they reached the northeast coast of Ansalon, only thirteen of the craft remained. Rather than giving thanks for their deliverance, the Smiths laid hands on the Scions and fed all but thirteen of them to the raging waters.

Only the thirteen were left, one for each of the thirteen barges that remained. And these Scions received the thirteenth barge, being told to set sail and never return. Otherwise the Smiths would slay them. Straightaway, the Scions put out to sea. The Smiths made landfall on the northern bluffs in the bay of Nordmaar in those ancient lands.

Discovering that the Graygem had preceded them to the land, the Smiths grew fearful and hid in limestone caves and caverns. They named their new home Kal-Thax, the "cold forge."

At that time, among humans, there was a great ruler named Gargath, an acolyte of Zivilyn. He watched the chaos in the land grow and prayed to his god for guidance. Zivilyn gifted the lord with two godstones, forged by Sirrion. The stones would end the reign of chaos. The first stone was green and named Pathfinder. Its clarion call to the chaos was like a lighthouse in the dark. The second stone was red and named Spellbinder. In its presence, the Graygem could be bound so that the world would once again be whole. Lord Gargath built a tower, and atop that tower he placed an altar. In the altar he set the twin stones, a trap for the Graystone. The Graygem answered the call of Pathfinder, and was trapped by Spell binder.

Meanwhile, in their dark, cold caves, the Smiths brooded. To turn their minds to useful pastimes, they once again worked on their craft. But their metals were weak and brittle. Even their simplest tools failed them. Their wondrous inventions remained oddly inert. They delved deeper into the ground, into "Cold Forge," which was a living cave of lime and water. There they made a wondrous discovery—a face etched in the stone. A living face. The face of their god, Reorx.

The face appeared saddened. The Smiths sought it out, sharing silent communion with their god. Why had they been so cursed? Why had their inventions abandoned them? And to each question came an answer. "Have you not abandoned the world? Have you not abandoned your own creations and responsibility? Accept your responsibility and my gifts to you will be restored."

The Smiths counselled among themselves and decided to capture and destroy the Graygem, the chaos they had unleashed. Smith scouts reported where the Graygem lay imprisoned. The Smiths sent word asking that Lord Gargath return the chaos stone to them. He declined their offer: he, too, had been changed by the stone. He now believed the stone to be his own creation, his key to an empire.

Again the Smiths counselled and they agreed to take the Graygem from Gargath by force. They were divided, however, as to how to accomplish this task. Some sought to ally with the other peoples of Krynn to form a mighty army. In answer to that call, armies from all the folk of Krynn came, bands of mercenaries, elves, ogres, and humans. Other Smiths built mighty war machines, trusting in the power of their inventions to save them. Still other Smiths forged mighty weapons and armor for their troops to bear into battle.

The siege was a long and dangerous affair. In the shadow of the chaos stone, alliances and battle plans went strangely awry. Even the Smiths' mighty war machines failed them. The first juggernaut's gearing seized up just short of the gates. The second, a fire-spewing bombard, locked wheels and crashed into the first engine, exploding and burning down both of the siege weapons. Losses for the Smiths and their allies were heavy. Still Gargath held against them.

The siege trudged onward. Nearly a month and a half passed before the Smiths' greatest siege engine, the Colossus,

was brought to the battlefield. Although the Colossus's battlements withered before the chaos and its wheels cracked and splintered, the mighty engine crashed into the tower wall, creating a breach that allowed the invaders in. The resulting quake dislodged Spellbinder and it fell down a stairwell and was buried beneath stone. The Graygem was free again.

A steely light erupted from the tower, and the Graygem emerged, hovering. The alliances dissolved as each people sought the gem for themselves. And the hideous power of the gem transformed the folk in the courtyard to reflect their greedy natures.

Tales of the battle's end are confused. Although the ancestor races are in dispute, most stories agree that the Graystone formed the races of kender, gnomes, dwarves, minotaurs, and goblins from the folk there. Kender came from excessively curious and childlike Smiths (some argue elves); gnomes came from Smiths who cared more for their inventions than for the gods; dwarves came from fearful Smiths who had only reluctantly joined the battle; minotaurs arose from stubborn ogres; and goblins came from ogres who were petty and cruel.

Dwarves say that they were the only race that remained unchanged: Smiths who had chosen to craft the arms and weapons and had remained behind in the caves. Even if this is true, the millennia that dwarves have spent beneath the surface of Krynn have worked slow and subtle changes on them from the Graystone's latent magic.

When the Graygem had completed its horrid work, it once again fled to wander the land. Some of the Smith folk pursued it all the way to Sancrist Isle in the west. Here, most of the gnomish Smiths settled, unwilling to brave the tossing sea again. Still others built more boats and followed after.

As the Graystone passed west over the seas, it formed the Dimernesti from fisher elves and the Dargonesti from elven sea merchants.

## The Second Dragon War

With the passing of the Graygem, the land of Ansalon was reborn. Those who would become dwarves abandoned their dwelling in the cold caves of Kal-Thax and journeyed south to the Khalkist mountains. There they delved the dwarven kingdom of Thoradin, called "New Hope." Balifor was founded by a kender named Balif, friend and confidant to Silvanos, and became homeland to this new race. In the century that followed, many other city-states were born. For example, the province of Mithandrus, the land of the bull, was founded by an expeditionary force of minotaurs.

While delving Thoradin, the dwarves discovered in the bedrock five ancient stones covered with runes and glowing with magical might. Distrustful of all magic, the dwarves mined the five stones and brought them to the surface to remove all taint of the wild force from their home.

Soon, minions of Takhisis had found the stones and reunited them with the stony bodies of the dragons whose spirits they held. The five dragons, asleep since the end of the First Dragonwar, awoke again. A new dragon war began over the next decades drawing all the people of Ansalon into the maelstrom.

Once again Ansalon's folk united, but the five dark dragons summoned the remaining bakali and an army of other Evil forces to their side. A siege was laid against Silvanesti. Again, magical aid came to end the war.

After wandering at sea for a time, the Scions (the enchanted family of Smiths), returned to the shores of Ansalon. Hidden from the eyes of their brethren, the Scions each went their own way. They secretly gathered those who had been touched by the stone and gained powers of wild magic. The Scions tutored them in the proper use of their powers.

When the days grew dark and short for Silvanost, three elven wild mages, trained by the Scions, banded together to drive off the dragons. Standing at the Tower of the Sun, these novice wild talents awakened the magic of land and sky—so much so that the very elements rebelled against the dragons. The wyrms were swallowed by the ground for all time. But the novice mages had tapped into far more magic than they could control. The elements lashed back on their masters, devastating the lands all about with floods and fires and earthquakes. Thousands perished.

Only the original three mages remained in the Tower. When they saw that the folk of Silvanesti and Kharolis meant to harm them for the damage they had caused, these three mages called upon the gods for help.

The brother-gods of magic heard the cry. With their power, they seized the tower and removed it from the face of Krynn, setting it in a higher plane. Thus, the tower became the Lost Citadel and the three mages became the founders of the Orders of High Sorcery. The brother-gods seized the five rune-stones they had given to the elves centuries earlier. They hurled the stones into the sky so that the dark dragons could never again awaken. There, the stones became the five eyes of the Dark Queen's five-headed constellation.

The brother-gods clouded the minds of the peoples so that the other wild mages could escape into the wilderness. There they lived in seclusion, perfecting their craft. For a hundred years, the gods of magic trained and instructed their chosen disciples in the ways of magic. At last, the three mages returned to Krynn to lead the wild mages out of hiding. They constructed five bastions of magic in remote regions to shelter all mages from the hostile world. These were the Towers of High Sorcery.

In shame at being responsible for the return of dragons to the world, the dwarves withdrew into Thoradin and shut their doors.

## Ergoth Ascendant

In 2600 PC, the barbarian chieftain Ackal Ergot united the Khalkist barbarian tribes following the war. Stealing from the ruined ogre cities and homes, Ergot founded the first nation of humans and named it after himself: Ergoth. With sword and flame, he exterminated those who would not join him, and ruled those who would. Slowly, he absorbed the plains tribes and their lands into Ergoth. The nation was a brutal, bestial creation, ruled by warlords and tyrants.

With the decline of ogres into barbarism and stupidity, the retirement of dwarves from the affairs of the world, and the withdrawal of the Silvanesti to repair their lands, Ergoth quickly became the dominant nation in Ansalon. As its boundaries spread from the southern Kharolis Mountains to the northern shore, Ergoth set off minor skirmishes with neighboring nations. The dwarves proved especially problematic. Luckily, the expansion ended with the death of Ackal Ergot.

The ascendance of Ackal Dermount to the throne of Ergoth brought the land into a mercantile age. He found war unprofitable and detrimental to his country's welfare. Dermount therefore set aside the sword of Ergot and began trade with Silvanesti and the dwarves. Races along the borders began to intermarry and become assimilated. Many outland elves shared human blood.

In 2600 PC, a second kender nation called Hylo was founded in the Sentinel Mountains north of Ergoth. This settlement arose when an entire clan of kender explored and "borrowed" the first floating citadel, which had been created by a band of mages as a prototype for the Towers of High Sorcery. The floating castle was carried by prevailing winds to the northwest until it crashed into the ridge of the Sentinels. Hylo



would later be annexed by Ergoth in 2200 PC, much to the Empire's continuing regret.

During this time also an outcast race of dwarves appeared. Referred to as "Dirt Eaters," "Muckers," or "Dump Men," these interbred dregs of human and dwarven society dwelt in the refuse of civilization. They were treated no better than slaves and idiots. Presumably, these were the first Gully Dwarves, a race that continues to plague society today.

For nearly six hundred years, Ergoth would write the history of the world. It was a kingdom of grandeur despite its foundation on brutality. Although the panacea of civilization softened the barbaric cruelty of former ages and created trade and international relations, it also introduced provincial battles, barbarian uprisings, and border disputes.

In 2515 PC, the world lost Silvanos, the founder of civilization. Silvanos was laid to rest in a crystal tomb and his son Sithel assumed leadership of the elven nations. But Sithel would never have the patience and tolerance of his father. He heralded the beginning of elven disdain for the other races of the world. Border relations became strained among humans, half-elves, elves. Sithel's greatest gift to the world was the birth of his twin sons, Sithas and Kith-Kanan.

While tensions grew between Ergoth and Silvanesti, dwarves from the lands about Thoradin decided to journey south to the Kharolis Mountains, on the borders of Ergoth. There they delved a new kingdom to exploit the trade opportunities with Ergoth. This new kingdom also created a homeland that was more open to the world than Thoradin. Thus Thorbardin was delved, its name meaning "Best New Hope."

While trade flourished between Ergoth and Thorbardin, Thoradin continued to decline, becoming even more isolated from the outside world. However, Thorbardin's prosperity was not without problems. The neighboring provinces of Ergoth felt that the dwarves had invaded their borders. Resentment grew over mining rights in the Kharolis Mountains.

## Kinslayer War

Tensions continued to mount along the Silvanesti-Ergoth western border. Kith-Kanan, the younger of the twin sons of Sithel, was asked to lead the Wildrunner border elves to protect the borders from incursions. Some historians suggest that Sithas sent his twin on this task to remove him from the elf-maid, Hermathya, whom they both loved. Despite the open friendliness in Sithas and Kith-Kanan's relationship, a smoldering rivalry lay there as well.

Kith-Kanan maintained the peace for nearly a century. His patience and tolerance for humans, dwarves, and other races became renowned. Yet, in 2192 PC, when his father, Sithel, Speaker of the Stars, visited the frontier to sign a new peace pact, he was slain by humans who mistakenly shot at his stag mount.

Sithas, the older of the twins, assumed command of the elven nation and declared war on Ergoth. Kith-Kanan was named general. Elves fell into battle against humans, with their half-elf brothers caught in the middle. This angry war scared the world for forty years.

When the first battles broke out, Kith-Kanan was pledged to the Kagonesti Wildrunner maiden Anaya, Keeper of the Forest. Sadly, Anaya, heavy with Kith's child, was slain in the first battle of the coming war. Instead of dying, she transformed into an oak tree even as her predecessor Keepers had done.

Despite many victories, Kith-Kanan's armies again and again failed to drive back the Ergothians, who were led by a dark, unaging wizard named Giarna. Kith-Kanan did, however, rescue the human oracle Suzine, a servant of the dark mage. They fell in love and were married. The rift between Kith-Kanan and his twin brother widened with Kith's marriage to a human. Sithas's queen, Hermathya, still coveted his

brother, and his son revered his uncle Kith.

The Kinslayer War spewed blood across the Kharolis plains for nearly forty years. It was a period of long battles, vast interludes of retrenchment, starvation, disease, and death. Savage blizzards froze the armies, while fierce storms ripped capriciously through the ranks of both sides. A dreary sameness marked the war. The elves pursued the humans, attacked and slew them, and then more humans took the place of the fallen.

General Giarna maintained complete control of the Ergothian forces, although his losses were horrendous. The pressure of his attacks chipped away at the elves, while reinforcements balanced his losses. A stalemate evolved, with the elves ever victorious, but the humans always avoiding final defeat.

Despite this monotonous pattern, the course of the war had several key junctures. The human Siege of Sithelbec, which reduced that elven town to rubble, must be considered a decisive hour. The Battle of Sithelbec turned the tide and will always be ranked among the turning points of the history of Krynn.

Throughout the war, the life of one individual best illustrated the tragedy and inevitability of the Kinslayer War. This was the human wife of Kith-Kanan, Suzine des Quivalin.

Relative of the great Emperor Quivalin V of Ergoth, as well as heir to a total of three Quivalin rulers, her presence in the army of her nation's enemy served to solidify human resolve. Disowned by her monarch and sentenced by General Giarna to hang if she were ever caught, Suzine took to the elven cause with steadfast loyalty. Over thirty-five years, Suzine remained loyal to her husband as lover, companion, advisor, and wife. She was never accepted by the elves, although her two half-elf children were raised among the clans of the Wildrunners.

Sadly, as is the way with humans, Suzine aged and grew old, while Hermathya remained young and passionate. It is rumored that Kith-Kanan was drawn to his former love's passion. Perhaps this explains Suzine's self-sacrificial attempt to slay General Giarna. The "Song of the Lost Sadness," a ballad of Kith-Kanan, tells how Suzine bravely confronted her former master. When he proved invulnerable to all attacks, she slew herself rather than be used against her husband.

The decisive battle of the Kinslayer War wrote the final chapter to many a hero's life. Great were the losses. Parnigar and Kencathedrus fell. Sithas' son, Vanesti, suffered grievous wounds while defending his uncle from Giarna. From that day forward, Vanesti was crippled. At last Giarna met defeat.

Sithas, his appetite for war lost, sued for peace with Ergoth. He granted the western realms of Silvanesti to Kith-Kanan and the Wildrunners, who had become heavily interbred with humans. And the western elves founded Qualinesti.

## Swordsheath Scroll

In the years following the Kinslayer Wars, the Empire of Ergoth began to decline. A border dispute with the dwarves of Thorbardin over mining rights resulted in a series of skirmishes named the War of the Mountain.

But at last, Sithas engineered the signing of the Swordsheath Scroll between elf, dwarf, and human. The western Silvanesti elves were granted a homeland in the enchanted woods where Anaya's tree grew. This elven state would form a buffer between the humans and the dwarves. The legendary *Hammer of Kharas* ("Hammer of Honor") was forged by the dwarves as an offering of peace to the Ergothians. From then on, the hammer was passed annually from one nation to the next as a constant reminder of the bond of unity and peace between them.

At this time, all mention of Thoradin, the original kingdom

of the dwarves, vanished from the histories. Historians are uncertain as to why Thoradin vanished. Some say the dwarves were destroyed by the unfortunate discovery of the Evil blackflame—a living embodiment of darkness.

The Age of Light ended with the peace of Pax Tharkas, the “Peace of Friends.” To commemorate that peace, the dwarves of Thorbardin and the elves of Qualinesti united to build a fortress monument on the trade route between their nations. The fortress, Pax Tharkas, was built by both races and manned by both. It ensured the peace. The nephew of Quevalin V ascended to the throne of Ergoth and an age of peace and prosperity began.

## The Rose Rebellion

In 1900 PC (the beginning of what scholars now call the Age of Right), the Quevalin line in Ergoth at last came to an end. A coup led by the army placed Emperor Macqui Hellmann on the throne. More brutal and exploitative emperors followed. Taxes became unreasonable and the northern provinces were exploited for their resources and riches. Again and again, small rebellions arose in the north and the east, but the empire’s legions were sent to swiftly crush all resistance. Then, even harsher penalties were imposed on the peoples.

In the year 1812 PC (by the new reckoning) Vinas Solamnus, a skilled commander, was appointed to the highest military office in the empire. The Emperor believed him to be the perfect pawn; he would instead prove the Emperor’s undoing.

In 1801 PC, a Great Uprising occurred in northern Vin-gaard. Praetor Solamnus marched his legions north and east to crush the rebellion. Initial victories came swiftly, but were unsatisfying. The people showed no signs of abandoning their rebellious ways. For a year, Solamnus studied the enemy’s motivations and strategies, determined to end the conflict without massacring all the people. Gradually, he came to realize that the Empire had provoked the rebellion through vile and repressive treatment of its citizens. By the end of the year, Solamnus and most of his troops agreed to join the rebellion.

The nations of northern Ergoth rallied to Solamnus’s banner and began training armies in secret. Solamnus meanwhile stalled the emperor’s inquiries for progress. At last, unable to stall any longer, Solamnus and his army marched south and west toward the capital.

With skill and daring, Solamnus managed to outmaneuver Ergoth’s remaining legions, recruiting many of them. He laid siege to Daltigoth in the beginning of winter. By the next spring, the Emperor Emann Quisling surrendered, agreeing to Solamnus’s terms to give each province the right of self-determination. Many of the provinces in the west, close to Daltigoth, remained loyal to the Empire. Most of the north-eastern provinces and Hylo asserted their independence. The human nations declared Solamnus their Lord.

In an effort to ensure continued justice and freedom for the lands, Solamnus (guided by Kiri-Jolith, Habbakuk, and Paladine) formed the Orders of the Knights of Solamnus.

## Birth of Nations

In the ensuing years, many new nations evolved. The states of Palanthus, Caergoth (Southlond), and Lemish grew and prospered despite frequent raids by barbarians on their borders. The art of sailing was taught to humans by the elves, and the hidden bay of Istar was discovered along with its fertile lands. Here lay the ruins of ancient ogre nations and-cutoff by mountains, deserts, and seas-the emerging merchant nation of Istar.

Istar, at first just a confederation of city-states, grew quickly

into a center of world trade. All goods and crops from eastern Ansalon channeled through the port city of Istar to all points west. By supplying food, textiles, and crafts to the war-torn nations of the west, Istar grew more rapidly than any civilization to date.

## The Third Dragon War

Records of the Third Dragon War tend to be disjointed and confused. Much of the war’s victory hinged upon the works of a solitary hero and his minotaur companion. The hero’s death prevented historians from learning his full role in the war, and his companion chose to report the history from a strictly military perspective. What can be discerned of the Third Dragon War follows.

The Queen of Darkness, whose ceaseless attempts to corrupt the world had sparked warfare throughout history, once again plotted to make Krynn hers. This time her plot dealt with dragon eggs. With her five chromatic dragons buried deep beneath the mountains, Takhisis sought to hatch the dragons’ eggs.

Calling on the aid of the lizardmen, bakali, Takhisis brought the eggs of her five dragons to the surface. They appeared to be rare crystals of great value. She distributed these eggs by tricking gem collectors into buying them. The eggs hatched and the wyrmlings devoured the collectors. None were left to warn of the dragons’ return.

Generations passed as the wyrmlings matured. Only when they were full-grown did Takhisis call her dragons forth into the light. By then, Krynn’s doom had already been assured. Takhisis had raised many dozens of the adult brutes. With armies of bakali around them, the dragons laid siege to Ansalon.

For decades, the great wyrms wrapped their shroud of terror about Ansalon. First, small border kingdoms fell, and then the dragons turned on Solamnus.

The war was meant to be swift and final. The Dragon Queen had sent forth her dragons, slaves, warriors, and mages in one mighty force. The focus of their attack was Palanthus and the Knights of Solamnus. Takhisis saw in these knights a power that could one day destroy her children. But the knights had their own allies and, most importantly, they had the discipline and organization that the Queen’s forces lacked. The knights also fought for the Dark Queen’s eternal foe, Paladine, and his sons, Kiri-Jolith and Habbakuk.

The might and determination of both sides created a horrible stalemate. The bodies of humans, dragons, ogres, and goblins piled in high mounds and smoke-blackened pyres. The carrion creatures fed and plagues began.

Wizards had at last gained a level of respect in the land, and from their five Towers of High Sorcery they sought to turn the war in the favor of the humans. The highest mages of the three orders met in the Tower of Palanthus and created the five *dragon orbs*. These potent artifacts were modeled on the five runic godstones of old. Even the wizards of the Black Robes joined in this effort, seeing that if Takhisis were to win, the balance would be destroyed and the world would plunge into chaos.

Thus, on a night when all three moons were in high sanction, the greatest wizards of the age (including the Black-Robed Fistandantilus) united to make the five orbs. They imbued the artifacts with a shadow-spirit of their own, a spirit that called out to the fell wyrms, luring them to their doom. And for a time, the *dragon orbs* stemmed the flood of evil. Many dragons fell. But still the forces of darkness returned with wave after hoary wave.

Then rose a young knight named Huma, who held rare insight, kindness, and compassion. To him was drawn a companion, the likes of which the world had never seen. The

minotaur's name was Kaz. Huma's other companion was the mysterious elven healer Gwynneth (or Trueheart), whom Huma fell in love with. He later discovered her to be a silver dragon capable of taking human form.

With the guidance of Paladine, Huma forged the first true dragonlances. With them, he rode into battle on the back of Gwynneth. The love between Huma and his silver dragon forged the way for an alliance with other Good dragons. More dragonlances were made to use in battle against the Dark Queen's forces.

At last, Huma and Gwynneth mounted an attack against Takhisis herself. She fell before the dragonlance. In agony, she swore an oath by the High God to retire from the world and make all dragons sleep if only the lance were removed from her. Sadly, both Huma and Gwynneth died in the final battle. Only Kaz remained to honor the bargain, freeing the Queen of Darkness in return for her fulfillment of the oath.

From that day forth, all dragons departed from the lands of Ansalon, and their servants left as well. The Dark Queen retreated to the Infernal Realms to lick her wounds. Deep within the earth, the dragons and their kind fell asleep and left the world in peace for an age.

## a golden age

The end of the Third Dragon War (or the Second Dragon War by former reckoning) heralded the beginning of a golden age. Although the land was severely scarred, it was at least free from the grip of dragons for a time. Ergoth suffered most greatly. It would never again achieve the glory of its lost empire.

As the world recovered from its wounds, the Knights of Solamnia lost their way. The new, safer Ansalon had no great villains to vanquish, no great evils to right. Many of the knights turned to rebuilding their lands and governments. Others resigned their posts altogether and scattered.

Other folk, however, were blessed in the years following the war. Chief of these were the merchants of Istar. Only Istar, in its desolate location, remained untouched by the war's ravages. From its safe locale, Istar plotted to guide the world into an age of glory. The power of Istar to effect this change was not military, but commercial.

In Thorbardin, Istar found a ready ally. As center of trade, Istar desperately needed the coins minted in Thorbardin. In return, Istar provided a vast market for dwarven crafts and tools. The two nations entered an agreement of mutual support. Istar built a mighty fleet to circumnavigate the seas and to carry trade-goods to all nations. Thorbardin sent forces back to reopen Thoradin as a major manufacturing center for Istar. These forces found the halls of Thoradin oddly empty and abandoned as if its previous occupants had left only the day before. An occasional ogre clan inhabited the otherwise empty halls. In a brief series of skirmishes, the dwarves drove the ogres out and reclaimed Thoradin. Thoradin swiftly became a supplier of tools, weapons, and coinage to Istar.

Soon afterward, Thorbardin received mining rights to the Garnet Mountain range in Solamnia. The mines of Kayolin opened, setting up a triangle of trade between Garnet, Thorbardin, and Istar, with Thoradin at its center.

In this time, Thorbardin also expanded within. The dwarves carved out one of the wonders of the ancient world. They constructed the dwarven city of Zakhalex within a broad column of rock in their mines. They also founded the hill dwarf county of Hillow.

Despite the good fortunes of the rest of the world, Silvanesti continued to isolate itself. Only Qualinesti elves retained contact with humans and other demihumans.

In 910 PC, fifty years after being driven out of Thoradin, the ogres attempted to return to their one-time home. With the

aid of the Knights of Solamnia, the dwarves managed to drive the ogres away.

Istar continued to grow in power and prestige in the world, becoming the major supplier of tools and arts, and acting as brokers for grain, woods, and spices for the rest of the nations. In an attempt to better control international trade, Istar imposed trade standards and fair-price standards. These regulations were poorly received by the kender of Balifor to their south. The kender protested the end of barter and haggling and refused to obey the strict trade tariffs. In retaliation, they began to manipulate various trade markets, buying up all supplies to raise demand (and prices), then dumping their excesses onto the marketplace to drop prices disastrously. The Kender Trade Wars nearly brought Istar to its financial knees, and it drove many merchant houses to bankruptcy.

In a desperate effort to save their economy, Istar agreed to the creation of a free market, with a special tariff exemption for kender (the so-called "Kender Tax"). In return, kender agreed to cease their market manipulations. This pact became known as the Kendermeld.

Next, Istar clashed with Silvanesti naval merchants when they attempted to gain control of key ports and sea lanes, barring the elven merchants. The Silvanesti retaliated by attacking Istar privateers and successfully blockading the Straits of Karthay, thus preventing any Istarian merchants from entering or leaving. Istar appealed to Solamnia for help. Acting as peacemakers, Solamnia persuaded the elves to allow Istar to add its signature to the Swordsheath Scroll. This event became known as the Elfmeld. Istar learned from its previous two mistakes and decided to extend its trade standards through treaty rather than strong-arm tactics.

In 530 PC, the ogres of the Khalkist mountains founded the nation of Kernen and worked to intercept the caravans from Istar to Thoradin. For five years the so-called Ogre Wars continued until Istar, acting on behalf of Thoradin, appealed to Solamnia for help. Together the three nations put an end to the ogre raids. Thoradin then signed an exclusive trade treaty with Istar, known as Dwarfmeld, giving Istar a lock on 50% of all metal goods.

Finally in the 5th century PC, when Solamnia became increasingly dependent on Istarian trade, the king signed the Swordsheath Scroll in what was later termed the Great Meld. The signers of the scroll joined forces to put down raids by barbarians from Estwilde, Khur, and Nordmaar. Istar branded the barbarians as pagans, obviously acting in devotion to the gods of darkness. The Knights of Solamnia, anxious for a battle after hundreds of years of relative peace, joined the cause to suppress the pagans. A series of skirmishes against barbaric tribes followed. Solamnia justified these battles as a reaction to a massive barbarian uprising under the leadership of such men as Atillak the Ravager, Kobbule the Club, and Tarnriper.

## Peace in The Land

The lands of Ansalon experienced nearly 200 years of peaceful coexistence. Then, in 280 PC, Istar started down the road to corruption. The folk of Istar claimed to be the moral center of the world and installed their first Kingpriest. Solamnia quickly applauded the effort to support the cause of Good throughout the land.

Istar, however, soon became caught up in worldly and temporal affairs, forgetting the affairs of the spirit. Istarians began to believe that only they knew right from wrong. In this way, Istar repeated the errors of the ogre empires, suppressing the will and independence of the individual in favor of national decrees of the Kingpriest and his corrupted priesthood.

The elves of Silvanesti grew disgusted by this sham. They shunned the outside world, drawing within to trade only with

their cousins in Qualinesti. Both elven states were too distant from Istar to feel its heavy hand, as of yet.

The succession of Kingpriests that followed seemed to be drawn from the most power-mad and corrupt priesthood members in Istar. Soon, the Kingpriest proclaimed that all Evil was an affront to gods and mortals and needed to be destroyed. A rigid list of evil acts followed and bands of ruffians formed brute squads to enforce the outrageous laws. Anyone found guilty of an "evil" act would have lands and property confiscated. Some few who were "truly heinous" were sold into slavery, sent to fight in the arena, or executed outright.

While the Knights of Solamnia detested these excesses, they were currently too disorganized and too dependent on trade with Istar to openly resist their laws.

Priests of Istar became a specialized militia empowered by the Kingpriest to create a reign of terror. Many priests purportedly lost the ability to perform miracles.

Wizardry was viewed as a threat to the power of the Kingpriest. Priests roused mobs of citizens to fear and revile magic, stirring them to attack the Towers of High Sorcery. When the rioting mobs approached two of the towers, mages knew that the magical items and spells in the towers would be disastrous in the hands of the uninitiated. They therefore destroyed the towers themselves, devastating the countryside. The Kingpriest, fearing what would happen if the magic pent up in all five towers were released, made a pact with the wizards. He offered the wizards safe passage to a faraway land if they would leave the remaining towers undestroyed. The mages agreed.

The Tower of Istar was seized by the Kingpriest himself and made into his abode. The Tower of Palanthus was cursed by a Black Robe Wizard, who threw himself from the tower-top to impale on the front gate. His curse raised the haunted Shoikan Grove and barred all from the Tower until the Master of the Past and Present should return. Only the Tower of Wayreth in far Qualinesti remained in the hands of the wizards.

Finally, in the year 6 PC, the Kingpriest asserted that evil thoughts were the same as evil acts. The priesthood began to use the *ESP* spells of renegade mages to read the thoughts of random subjects. The ensuing reign of terror and degeneration wracked the land. Ogres, minotaurs, goblins, barbarians, and occasionally elves, dwarves, and kender were hunted like animals and slain if caught outside the borders of their nations.

Thus, when the dragons had passed from the land, humans became worse still.

## Knight of The Black Rose

In the Age of Might, years before the Cataclysm, there arose a noble Knight of Solamnia. Lord Soth belonged to one of the ruling houses of the nation of Solamnia. His family had, for years, carried on the proud tradition of the Knights. For this service, they had been deeded a province named Knightlund, and given responsibility for the safety of that realm.

Records show that plagues swept the land in the latter years of the Age of Might, slaying many of Soth's uncles. At last, only Soth's father Aynkell Soth, remained. But Aynkell was not a knight; he was merely a second-rate clerk. However, the senior Soth had a son who had pledged loyalty to the order of the Knights. The elder was established as steward of the land until his son came of age.

History implies that the senior Soth had a weakness for the ladies, and his infidelities against his dear wife were a gossip of the time. Yet, Aynkell had the common sense and honor to step down from his honorary office, retiring quietly from public life when his son came of age. Nothing more is recorded of his deeds or indiscretions.

Lord Soth, who would one day come to be known as the Knight of the Black Rose, may have been an only child. Some records suggest, however, that he slew his half-brothers and sisters. Among them, purportedly, was at least one half-elf maiden, thanks to the dalliances of Soth's father.

For a time, young Soth remained true to his vows. He was a great and noble soldier for Good. He fought for justice and freedom and attained the highest honor, the Order of the Rose. His heart was pure and his soul apparently spotless. When it came time for him to build his keep, he fashioned it to resemble a red rose.

After a reasonable time, a proper marriage of state was arranged for him. A nobleman's daughter and only child, Lady Gladria of Korinne, had much to offer in the way of a dowry. But she was barren. Lord Soth grew cold and distant from her and his vision of founding a dynasty faded. Soth took to riding the countryside with his thirteen loyal men-at-arms, looking for some wrong to right and, perhaps, hoping only to avoid his unhappy home.

On one journey to a council of Knights in Palanthus, Soth witnessed a band of ogres attacking elf maids on a pilgrimage to become Revered Daughters of Paladine. He rescued the maidens, and the youngest, Isolde Denissa, was taken by this vision of a man. Soth returned with Isolde to Castle Dargaard, making some pretense as to why he brought the woman with him. Whether by fate's hand or the clever ministrations of Soth's faithful and corrupt steward, Caradoc, Soth's heart became so tangled with Isolde's that they soon became secret lovers.

Lady Gladria's response to this affair is unknown. Perhaps she grew jealous or rife with petty anger, or perhaps she secretly thanked the gods that Soth had found someone who could give him children. At any rate, Lady Gladria was beset by some malady and shortly thereafter died. Reports indicate evidence of blood, perhaps from an aborted childbirth—perhaps from murder. Gladria's body was cremated.

Soth took the young Isolde as his wife, and she remained true and devoted to him even despite rumors of foul play against his first wife. Within a month, Isolde was heavy with child, and within the half-year, Soth had Peradur, the son he had coveted.

When evidence was brought before the Knights of Solamnia that Lord Soth had broken his marriage vows, the knights besieged Dargaard, demanding justice. Soth ignored them, remaining in Dargaard Keep and making therein a life for himself.

As the time of the Cataclysm drew near, Soth repented his sins and asked for a chance at redemption. Thanks in part to Isolde's beseeching of Mishakal, Paladine provided Soth the chance for redemption. Soth saw a vision of the destruction that the Kingpriest would cause, and received from Paladine a quest that would stop the madness. The quest required that Soth sacrifice his life, but he would save the world in doing so.

Strengthened by Isolde's love, Lord Soth rode forth. But on his journey he encountered Isolde's former companions. The elf women, ashamed by their failure to rescue Isolde from Soth's seduction, sought to ensure his undoing. They threatened to reveal Soth's deeds and spoke lies to him of Isolde's infidelities. In anger, Soth turned back from his quest to punish his wife—the alleged faithless harlot.

Returning to Dargaard, he confronted Isolde, accusing her of betrayal. As he moved to strike her down, the Cataclysm struck. The great chandelier in the hall crashed to the floor and in the resulting flames, the elfmaid and her child were consumed. Desperate, Isolde held out the child for Soth to rescue him. But Soth turned away in anger. Then did Isolde curse him. As the fire consumed him so did the curse. He became an unliving, yet undead creature of the dark. His



wife's curse doomed him for eternity to remain in the world, living one tormented lifetime for each lifetime his folly had brought to an end.

Soth's castle and his armor were charred and blackened by the fire. He became the Knight of the Black Rose. His dark land was renamed Nightlund, and there he sat, brooding on his fate. The elven maidens who brought his downfall became ceaselessly keening banshees who circled his throne. The thirteen knights who remained loyal to him throughout his deeds of evil became skeletal warriors under his command.

## The fall of Istar

The glory of Istar dimmed as the Cataclysm neared. The Kingpriest saw fiends in shadows and despair in the night. Blinded by his own righteous pride, he hoped to summon the very gods to do his bidding. From the heart of his land, from the Temple of Istar, the Kingpriest spun his folly like a spider spins its web. He leached from the land its essence, plotting to enact a salvation for himself.

The gods sent thirteen omens to warn the folk of Ansalon of their coming doom. How quickly the people forgot the prophesy foretold by the elven priest, Loralon: "That if ever man, in pride, should challenge the gods, woe betide the world." These thirteen signs passed all but unnoticed among the folk.

- The gods' hands shall be withdrawn and man shall face his doom alone.
- The sky shall lament and beat the earth with its tears and cries of anguish.
- Fear shall visit the land.
- Light shall be devoured; hope shall flee.
- Darkness and despair shall be rekindled.
- The flame shall fail on the hearth.
- The plains will be cleansed.
- Brother shall turn against brother.
- Knowledge shall be veiled.
- Our children shall bleed for our sins.
- Nature shall turn against man in outrage.
- The bounty shall end and the blood of the land will wash the blot from the earth.
- And finally, the earth shall awaken!

But the Kingpriest, in his pride, did not heed the warnings. On the Eve of Yule—a time now known as the Night of Doom—all true priests left the world for a higher plane, never to be seen again. The wicked folk rumored that the Kingpriest had secretly murdered them and hidden their bodies.

On Yule Day, the sky turned a sickly green and a cyclone destroyed one of the seven towers of Istar's temple, pelting the city with a rain of marble. The storm pounded the land in rage unending for seven days.

Each day afterward, reports arrived from across the land, telling tales of some awesome or troubling event.

A pall spread over Balifor and Hylo, and the merry kender were found huddling beneath their beds.

The night sky darkened as the black moon Nuitari devoured the silver god's eye of Solinari and the red night candle of Nuitari.

The black flame—the living destroyer of life—awakened and burned again in the dwarven halls of Thoradin. In Solamnia, firewood would not light, leaving hearths cold and dark.

In Abanasinia, brushfires raged across the plains destroying the land.

Lord Soth broke from the council of the Knights. The council sought to redress him in war, but he retired from the world to his keep.

In Palanthus, an impenetrable white mist obscured everything. Only on the thirteenth day could a scribe even set pen to paper.



A cry came from Silvanesti: the trees were weeping blood. From Qualinesti came an alarm of animals turned violent. Tarsis told of torn and ruined nets.

Northern ports spoke of red tides that washed through the streets.

Finally, the Lords of Doom and many other sleeping volcanoes belched forth rivers of lava and ash.

Through all this, few casualties occurred, but the worst was at hand! Tremors began to shake the land, grinding away the lives of men as if so much wheat. A mighty roar filled the air and the sky rained fire!

A fiery mountain fell upon Istar. It dragged the capital city and the whole nation down to the sea floor. The Temple of Istar itself was teleported to the plane of the Abyss. The impact shuddered out from Istar and remade the face of Ansalon. (See the "Geography of Ansalon" section for specifics). All creatures, Good and Evil, hid in mortal terror.

### **Cause of The Cataclysm**

Speculation on the cause of the Cataclysm has ranged widely. How a mere mortal like the Kingpriest might bind the gods, forcing them to measures as drastic as the Cataclysm, is inconceivable. Even so, the Kingpriest apparently did bind the gods. The argument for this assertion follows.

Either the gods were unwilling to intervene before the Cataclysm or were unable to do so. The gods of Evil may well have been unwilling to intervene insofar as the Kingpriest forwarded their plans of Evil. The gods of Good and Neutrality, however, must have desired to intervene before the Cataclysm. The Kingpriest threatened to destroy all Good by corruption from within, and such a destruction would end the Balance and destroy the world. If the gods of Good and Neutrality could have saved Krynn sooner and in a manner less catastrophic, they *would* have.

Therefore, we must assume that at least the Good and Neutral gods were unable, not unwilling, to intervene sooner than the Cataclysm. Next, we must ask ourselves why they were unable to intervene.

Perhaps the Kingpriest somehow used the gods' gifts to the world—physical bodies, free will, mortality, and magic—to bind the gods somehow.

First of all, the Kingpriest's Evil clearly might have lured the gods to Krynn in avatar form. Once in avatar form, the gods would have physical bodies (the first gift) that the Kingpriest could somehow torture and imprison. Such an action would certainly bind the gods to some extent.

Secondly, we know that the Kingpriest played upon the free will (the second gift) of Ansalon's folk, directing their attention from the true gods to himself—the false god. By robbing the gods of their worshippers, the Kingpriest may have weakened them to a point where they could be controlled. By gaining worshippers himself, the Kingpriest may have gathered enough praise to become godlike.

Thirdly, if the Kingpriest had through praise or magic gained immortality, then he would have broken down the walls that separate humans from the gods. He would have sloughed off his mortality (the third gift). By stepping over this threshold, he might have become a peer of the gods.

Fourthly, when the Kingpriest moved into the Tower of High Sorcery in Istar, he inherited all magical magic (the fourth gift). Furthermore, when wizards and priests left the world, the Kingpriest became the only true practitioner of these arts (except, some would argue, Fistandantilus). The Kingpriest might have used magic to bind the gods.

If the gods were somehow bound and kept from acting before the Cataclysm, perhaps even the Cataclysm did not occur due to their interventions. Perhaps the Kingpriest himself summoned the Cataclysm as the culmination of a bizarre rit-

ual to gain all power. This theory would make some sense out of the fact that the Temple of Istar—the heart of Evil—was not destroyed, but gated to the Abyss. Might the Kingpriest have gone with it? If so, surely the journey would have struck him mad.

Let it be said now and a thousand times, these are mere conjectures. The Cataclysm will likely remain an eternal mystery to mortal folk.

### **Shadow Years/Dwarfgate War**

The years following the Cataclysm are lost in shadows. The nations of Krynn were devastated. Only a fragmented government remained in Solamnia under the charge of the feuding knights. Many cities of high civilization lay in rubble. Some nations lay submerged in depthless oceans; others had been forced up onto mountaintops. The devastation was massive. Only the nations of elves and the dwarven kingdoms of Kayolin and Thorbardin remained somewhat intact.

Following the Cataclysm, the hill dwarves and men of Xak Tsaroth fled southward to Thorbardin to avoid the ravages of barbarians and famines. But the kingdom of Thorbardin could not feed its own citizens, let alone the thousands of refugees outside. Instead, they barred their gates and turned their backs on the panicked people. Disorganized and lacking leadership, the refugees proved no match for the armed dwarves of Thorbardin.

Then, the dark mage Fistandantilus, appeared, planning to make himself the magical lord of all Ansalon. He built a magical fortress called Zhaman and rallied to him the army of refugees left outside Thorbardin. Then, with the refugees at his side, Fistandantilus launched an assault on Thorbardin. The battle raged for weeks, and Fistandantilus rained a horrible shower of spells on Thorbardin. When at last the sorcerer's defeat looked certain, Fistandantilus loosed his most powerful magic of all! This spell of destruction devastated not only his enemies, but his allies, his tower, and himself as well. The once-bountiful Plains of Dergoth became the Wastes of Dergoth. All that remained of his mountain fortress was a melted slag called Skullcap. And somewhere, deep beneath Skullcap, (legend has it) lie Fistandantilus and the secrets to his power.

## Creation Myths

Each race on Krynn has its own cultural biases and blind spots. History can give the facts and the actions, but only through their stories and ballads and myths can we determine the personalities of the races. Here are four portraits in myth.

### Silvanesti Myth

"Before time and substance, there was nothing. The High God opened a door from another place and stepped through into the emptiness. But she sorrowed, for it was a desolate place. And she lay down in chaos like a woman asleep.

"Then Chislev, whom we call Nature, and Reorx, whom we call Manufacture, happened through the door to see the High God so distraught. And Chislev said, 'Make us a world, Reorx, that the High God needn't weep.' Grieved in kind, the rotund Reorx swung his mighty hammer to forge chaos into a world. Thus he created a ball of rock. Still the High God did not rise from grief.

"Chislev descended to walk upon the vast and barren ball of rock. It was more desolate than chaos itself, and its rough stones sliced her feet. Where her tears fell, rivers poured forth. Where her feet bled, the salty oceans rose. When Chislev saw the rivers and oceans, she was glad. She laughed and skipped and danced across the world. Where she laughed, beautiful meadowlands blanketed the stone. Where she skipped, forests grew. Where she danced, rocks piled into huge mountains.

"But still the world was lonely, for none lived in it. So Chislev stooped and fashioned from clay every creature of land, sea, and air. Once all were made, she laughed at their small and still forms. Hearing her laughter, the figures sprang to life.

"The ringing of Reorx's hammer and the sound of Chislev's laughter awoke the slumbering High God. She, too, laughed.

The sound brought all the other gods through the open door—Paladine and his six, Gilean and his four, and Takhisis and her six. They all were so struck by the new world that they began to bicker over who should rule it. Annoyed by the clamor in the heavens, the High God slammed the door and said, 'Silence!' And they were silent!

### Dwarven Myth

"In the days before history and before the world, everything was a jumbled chaos. Jumbled and useless it was. And the High God was flummoxed. He reached into his robe and pulled out the sticks he had brought from the other place and started whittling. He whittled one stick—a pleasantly stout stick with a stern expression—but still hadn't thought what to do with the chaos. He whittled another. Still nothing. He whittled twenty-one sticks and in the end was all the more flummoxed. So the High God said, 'What should I do with the chaos?'

"The stout stick, whom the High God called Reorx, said, 'I'll make a round and sturdy world in my own image.' A lithe stick called Chislev said, 'And I will make trees in my own image.' A reedy stick called Zeboim said, 'I will make oceans for me to live in.' A beautifully carved stick named Paladine said, 'I will make dragons in my own image! And all the other sticks cried out what they would make.

"The High God, pleased with all the ideas, asked the beautiful stick Paladine to create his dragons first. Paladine did so, clutching the elemental power of chaos in fistfuls and forming noble dragons in rainbow hues. Though this creation pleased the High God, a thorny stick called Takhisis was jealous: she wanted to be the first creator and have the first creation bear her image. So she corrupted the dragons, making them Evil in her likeness.

"Disturbed by the folly that had come of Paladine and Takhisis's squabble, the High God turned to Reorx the Forger



for a better creation. Reorx reared back with his mighty hammer and pounded the chaos as a blacksmith strikes red-hot iron. Each blow flung sparks into the ether, and each spark became a star. The other gods watched in awe, certain they could never forge such wonders. The last mighty blow of Reorx's hammer created Krynn, a gloriously smooth and stout ball of iron.

"The High God applauded, but now the other gods were anxious to do their creating. They flooded down upon Reorx's perfect world and proceeded to ruin it with deep gashes, high ridges, puddles and ponds and lakes and oceans. As though these were not insult enough, the gods filled the place with grasses, ferns, and trees, and infested it with all manner of wriggling, flapping, creeping, climbing, and flying beasts.

"Reorx's wonderful creation of simplicity now burgeoned and teemed. Reorx stomped mightily upon the ground, raising a mountain in his anger. That mountain would later be called Thorbardin.

"The High God comforted Reorx, 'This world is for all the gods. They must learn to live and work together. I am sorry your perfect world is ruined but, see, you are not the only one who grieves.' And there, in a lovely glade, they saw Paladine weeping amidst statues of his lost dragons. He had fashioned one dragon statue for each of the rainbow hued dragons he lost. The statues were made of only the finest metals of Krynn: gold, silver, bronze, brass, and copper.

"The High God asked, 'Paladine, have you created nothing more than these statues for my world?' Paladine turned his sorrowing eyes toward the High God. 'Yes, I am sorry. I can create nothing new. My heart lies with my lost children! Reorx pitied the poor god and said, 'Your creations shall be the greatest of all-five Good dragons for our world.' And so saying, he struck each dragon statue with his hammer. The shuddering ring of the hammer blow quickened the metal into life, and the five metallic dragons took to wing above the world."

### **gnomish Myth**

"Before everything else, there was a machine called chaos. It was infinitely large and infinitely complex. But it didn't do anything. It just ran and ran. Reorx, great god of the forge, saw this and said 'We have a design flaw. This machine doesn't do anything. We need to make some improvements to the machine-add some accessories so that it will save labor and make life simpler.'

"Reorx's first design modification was to put a giant cog at the center of the machine. With his mighty hammer, he struck part of the machine to forge the cog. The sparks from the forge flew up and became stars to light his work. At last the cog was finished. To make it truly efficient, he had made the cog not only round, but spherical. All cogs need teeth and grooves, so he made mountains and valleys.

"About this time, as always happens when one starts a big project out of doors, it started to rain. Irritated, Reorx cut channels into the spherical cog to control water flow. The channels became rivers. Soon, Reorx realized he needed some storage tanks for the water, so he hollowed out the basins we now call oceans.

"But the waters kept rising. Irritated, Reorx made sea creatures to drink the water. But water wasn't enough for these creatures. They began eating the cog. So Reorx made plants

for the sea creatures to eat. The plants crept up onto land and the sea creatures followed. And so came the flowers and trees, the beasts and birds. Reorx became truly flustered, thinking he should destroy his cog altogether.

"Just about that time, some other gods wandered over. 'What're you workin' on, Reorx?' they asked, trying to sneak a peek at his invention. Reorx, ashamed of his plant-and-beast-infested cog, would not let them see. He said, 'Go away. It's not finished.' One sly god named Takhisis looked at the stars that had flown up from the forge and said, 'You aren't using those sparks, are you Reorx? They're just by-products, are they not? Give them to me.' But Paladine said, 'Don't give them to her, she'll only corrupt them. Give them to me instead.'

"And so an uproar ensued over what god could have Reorx's sparks. At last, the High God happened over and said, 'If you are going to fight over them-by-products or no-none of you can have them. I will make them a people to live on Reorx's beautiful world. If you wish, each of the families of gods-Good, Evil, and Neutrality-can bestow a gift on these spark creatures. But none can control them.

"Paladine, patriarch of the Good gods, gave the spirits bodies so they could manipulate the world as do the gods. Takhisis, matriarch of the Evil gods, gave the spirits pain—hunger, thirst, disease, and death-hoping that she could enslave them through their desires and fears. Gilean, patriarch of the Neutral gods, gave the spirits free will so that they could choose freely between Good and Evil. Once these gifts were bestowed, the High God set the races of Krynn on the world.

"The cog was clearly ruined. It would still spin, but it could clearly not drive a whole universe the way Reorx had hoped. He shook his head and sighed, wishing he had left the chaos machine alone."

### **kender Myth**

"There was a big nothing called Void, and in it was a swirling thing called Chaos. Reorx, who made dwarves but also likes us, thought Chaos was interesting. He picked it up, borrowed a hammer Kiri-Jolith wasn't using, and pounded Chaos into a round world.

"Hmmm. Maybe it needs some decorations.' He took his hammer and made mountains, hills, and valleys. 'Better-but it's all sooty from the hammer. Perhaps if I wash it with that water Zeboim isn't using ...' And so the thing came to have rivers and oceans.

"Then he found some seeds that Chislev had thrown out. 'From seeds she doesn't even want, I will grow some flowers for her.' So, he took the seeds and planted them. Instantly, trees, grass, plants, and flowers sprang up.

"The world's looking better and better! He found a few of Habbakuk's fish and threw them into his ocean to keep them from suffocating. He gathered in a stray flock of Sirrion's birds and placed them on the world for safe keeping. Soon, Reorx's world was thriving.

"The gods, seeing their discarded things put to such good use, grew jealous. They complained to Paladine, who studied Reorx's world. He said, 'You're mad because Reorx made something good with your throw-aways? Well, too bad for you. Anyway, everything's so mixed up down there, you couldn't get it back if you tried!'"



# Lost folk of ansalon

Not only the national boundaries have changed with the millennia. As legends tell, the races of Krynn's people have changed, too. The creation myths explain that the first mortals to inhabit Krynn were ogres, elves and humans. Many other races have come into being since then. Some have been magically transformed. Some were changed by the gods as punishment or reward for their deeds.

As races were gained, so were others lost. This section describes the Lost Folk, the peoples no longer mentioned in the legends and histories of Krynn. Some have vanished from sight. Others still exist, but hide from the world. Still others have been recently rediscovered.

These descriptions follow the format previously used with the races of Krynn. Even those lost folk who seem to be gone for good are detailed in the present tense. It is possible that the gods, or even some adventurer, may yet discover them alive.

## Lost folk—Bakali

### appearance

Bakali look like lizards and walk like men. They are stoop-shouldered, thick-bodied, long-tailed creatures. They range from 6'-8' tall. Their scaly hides vary from yellow-green to mottled brown. They wear few or no clothes. Some have been known to wear belts and girdles as well as bandoliers. Bakali are just as comfortable walking on all fours with their tail hunched in the air, as they are walking upright.

Bakali are relatively long-lived, reaching over 100 years old. Their females can only lay a clutch of eggs every five years. Males are bigger, with larger mouths and blunter snouts. As with all reptiles, bakali outgrow and shed their skins (once every ten years). Older bakali have yellower hide and smaller scales.

Bakali language consists of short hisses, growls and smacks. Only about 15-25% of bakali can understand Common or use barbarian Hand Talk.

### attitudes and lifestyles

Bakali are distrustful and suspicious, a trait that comes from their vulnerability to cold and the fragility of their eggs. They keep to themselves and avoid all the civilized races of Ansalon. Though they may seem cruel and savage, having no compunctions against violence, individual bakali are often tolerant. Bakali are hostile to most civilized races, but they have a strong sense of honor and remember the good, as well as the ill, done to them. They place great store in friendships once they are made.

A lesser race, the jarak-sinn, are a throwback to a more violent past. The jarak-sinn were more aggressive and fecund. Their involvement in the Third Dragon War nearly caused the other folk of Ansalon to drive lizardmen into extinction. Vulnerable to the ravages of heat and dehydration, the jarak-sinn fell back to their marshes, which were then drained and burned, killing hundreds of thousands. Most surviving jarak-sinn live in the Great Moors or on the offshore islands of the Blood Sea. They quietly raid coastal villages and farms for sacrifices, leaving none alive to reveal their existence.

Bakali live in primitive, swamp villages or near muddy hot springs beneath the earth. Their buildings have oddly squat



doors and triangular corridors with reeds or woven mats underfoot. Pools of mud, shallow warm waters, and mounds of dried reeds are their favorite resting places. Their villages are often burrows in the bank with the entrance below the surface of the water. Bakali are tribal, and rarely unite with other tribes.

Bakali are omnivorous but prefer meat-either carrion that has softened on the bone, or small fish, rats, birds, and frogs that they can swallow in one gulp.

Bakali eggs are leathery shelled and are buried in mounds of warm sand or rotting vegetation to incubate until they hatch. The young bakali must survive for a year, battling siblings for food, space, and nests, before they reach maturity.

Bakali lead very basic lives: hunting, eating, basking in the sun and warm waters, or lazing in pools of mud. As warriors, bakali are ferocious, able to fight with tooth, claw and tail, or with primitive weapons. Their greatest weaknesses are that they become sluggish in the chill of night and they cannot venture far from their life-sustaining water. Their lizard ancestry gives them a nictating membrane to shield their eyes, and the ability to swim in water and slide through mud on their bellies as fast as they can walk on land.

### history

In the beginning, before there were men, before elves or ogres, there were the First People. Creations of the gods, they were made in the gods' own image that they might know their creators and worship the gods' first born, the dragons. And these people named themselves the bakali.

The first and only people during the Age of Starbirth, an age of reptiles and lizards, they themselves were lizards, and yet they were men. Therefore they are the original lizardmen.

The bakali were loved by the gods, but they were primitive. To them, the dragons were gods. They worshipped the child when they should be praising the parent. The gods were angered and they sent a time of cold and fear upon the lands that their children might know their anger and be chastised. Only Chisleb and Sirrion hurt for their creations. These two gods taught the suffering bakali the way of fur and fire, that

they might survive the long, cold night.

When the Queen of Darkness stole the five original dragons from the King of Light, and he in turn gave birth to the five dragons of Good, the bakali chose sides and fought. The close of the Age of Starbirth brought the end of the age of lizards. The bakali crawled deep into the earth with their brethren leaving the land to the starborn races that would follow.

Untold ages passed. The bakali knew little of the First Born, the dragons, of what they were or where they had gone. Then the Dark Queen came to them in the Age of Right, seeking to make them once again her pawns. From the depths of the earth did the bakali bring forth the eggs of her children, the spawn of the dragons. Thus did dragons return to the world.

But again, the bakali took sides. Some fought for Light, though most embraced the Dark. So, when at last Huma, the golden knight, defeated the Queen of Darkness and received her oath to withdraw from the world, so too did those lizard-men leave the land for a last time.

Who can say where they are today? What has become of them? Some believe that they traveled north, across the waters with their exiled masters. Others say they once again crawled away into the depths of the ground, never to return. Yet they left their mark on the world. Bakali were the only people to ever crossbreed with that poisonous race, the goblins. They sired the dark blooded trolls who make their homes in the marshes and swamps, once home to this lost race of wyrm.

## Religion

If bakali choose to worship gods they worship first the images of the Five Great Dragons, before the gods themselves. Among the gods they deign to worship, the two most prevalent are Chislev (Krik'k leetz) and Sirrion (Sirr'ushush); these two gods aided their people during the Cold Season and taught them survival. Bakali revere the flame and covet the fur of mammals.

Jarak-sinn, that misbegotten race, worship Chislev by offering her sacrifices (thus offending the giver of life). Few if any gain powers and blessings from her. Those who live on the outlying islands have found another goddess more willing to accept their sacrifices and violent nature: Zeboim.

## Tools, weapons, and Technology

Bakali are natural hunters and ferocious fighters. They have not mastered technology and view all technology with suspicion. Bakali are distrustful of wizard magic, calling instead on the elemental earth magic of old-ancient and eldritch embodiments of the raging elements.

Bakali weapons are fire-hardened spears of wood, tooth-edged clubs, short thrusting swords and bone-tipped javelins. They wear no armor, though some may carry shields of hide.

Bakali are said to be able to command serpents and lizards as others command dogs and horses, and make them their mounts and guardians.

Bakali have only the most primitive tools-pottery, baskets, and short axes for chopping and shaping wood. Bakali do not possess infravision, but they do have a heightened sense of smell and heat detection from pits behind their eyes. With these, they can sense the presence of intruders within 60' even if they cannot pinpoint the location.

# Lost folk-huldrefolk

## appearance



Faerie tales describe the huldrefolk or "faerie" as small, ranging in size from 1'-4' tall. They are humanoid in shape, naked and gray-skinned. They have bald heads, large eyes, sharp teeth, and no ears. Their three-fingered hands are broad and large for their body size. They can appear to be male or female at will.

Huldrefolk may assume a variety of physical forms to manifest themselves in mortals' reality. They may appear as a spectrelike figure of witch-fire, which is closest to their true natures. They may appear in their shadow-gray natural form. They may at will choose to resemble a vision of a specific element, for all huldrefolk control some aspect of creation. An insect lord of the huldrefolk might have a fly's head, for example. Lastly, and most commonly, huldrefolk may animate a physical form comprising the element they command (the insect lord would form a body from a swarm of creeping, crawling bugs).

Huldrefolk may appear youthful or aged, beautiful or ugly as suits their purpose.

## attitudes and lifestyles

Huldre appear to reflect the elements emotionally even as they do physically. Each huldre has both a light and a dark side. A huldre of grain wields both bounty and famine. Furthermore, a huldre's personality largely reflects the manner in which they are approached. When approached with respect, huldre respond in kind; when approached with scorn or anger, huldre reflect this nature as well. Still, huldre do not mimic the actions of others. Their responses are always capricious and individual, whether they respond in respect or rage.

A huldre's lifestyle reflects its native element. Those elements that are cruel and violent breed cruel and bestial huldre. Those that are light and joyous create pleasant and entertaining huldre. Faerie tales variously describe huldre as engaging in wild festivals, patrolling winsome woods, and stalking gloomy moors. Whatever, their lifestyle, the huldres' passions are extreme and manic: one moment they are clutched in melancholy, the next, they rave with passion.

Huldre bear offspring infrequently. Huldre often steal a mortal child and replace it with one of their changelings, so they can refresh their bloodlines. But if the changeling is exposed, the child mystically returns to its kin.

Huldrefolk can see beyond the realm of light and dark, recognizing things by their nature, spirit, aura, and emotions. They can also see invisible objects and people. As if to compensate for their sensitive sight, most huldrefolk are blinded by bright lights. Bright lights turn the huldre's actual form transparent, making them almost invisible to mortal eyes. Sunlight diffuses their energy and disperses their physical form.

In addition, because huldre are enchanted creatures, they are affected by attacks of cold iron and holy water.

## history

Although no one has seen huldrefolk for ages, an abundance of physical artifacts suggest that they once lived. They left remnants such as rings of monolithic stone on lonely hilltops and mammoth stone arches found across the face of Krynn (which are said to be gateways to a gray realm, where the faerie huldre now dwell).

Taladas is home to elves who bear the name of "huldrefolk," folk who avoid contact with others even as the bakali and shadowfolk do. Yet, the faerie huldrefolk are not elves. They are creatures of pure power. Faerie, they are called, and the Unseen, the Invisible, the Unknown.

History of the huldrefolk remains pure speculation. Clearly, their monolithic rings come from an age before history—the Age of Dreams. This was an age before magic, when the peoples of Krynn were as newborn as the gods. In those days, priests and shamans could tap the forces of the very elements. This power was called "nature magic."

The huldrefolk may have descended from ogres, elves, humans, or Smiths—no one knows. Scholars do agree, however, that the huldre embraced the passion of the elements, became one with them, and were forever changed.

When human civilization arose, the huldrefolk recognized that their time in the world had reached an end. They sought a new place for their own, a gray realm, untouched by civilization. They built a dozen mighty portals, aligned to the stars and the moons, that they might open a door into the realms beyond. Wizards speculate that the huldre failed, for in the present day, the portals are merely cold stone.

If faerie tales hold more wisdom than wizards, however, the huldrefolk now live beyond the portals and stone rings (or faerie rings) in kingdoms they have built in the gray. Some tales even claim that the huldrefolk still walk the world, unseen, untouching, and untouchable in the light of day. At night, they may take forms of wood, stone, metal, and earth that cavort about the land. But, if the dawning sun catches them in these solid forms, tales say, the huldrefolk are frozen within their elemental bodies, trapped forever.

## Tools, weapons, and Technology

Huldre rely upon magic rather than technology. Because they come from a time before wizardly magic, they are often immune to it. Priestly spells, however, have full effect. Huldre have little or no use for modern magic or tools, though they are fascinated by toys and animated machines.

## Lost folk—kyrie

### appearance



Kyrie are a bizarre mix of hawk and man. They have a human torso and head with feathery hair. Their bodies are covered with feathers and their arms are actually wings, though they possess rudimentary hands at the end of each wing. They have a birdlike tail for maneuvering and wiry legs with talons

on the end.

Kyrie possess large lungs and hollow bones, adults weigh-

ing often less than 100 pounds despite their 7' height. Their plumage is most often brown and gold, though rare individuals have had black or white wings.

## attitudes and Lifestyles

Kyrie are a quiet, passive, generally peaceful folk, unless provoked. They have a fierce pride and a low tolerance for invaders or trespassers, and will defend their nests and personal freedom with their lives, preferring death to subjugation.

Kyrie are the mortal enemies of minotaurs, who stole their Northstone and have, since the Cataclysm, waged an ongoing war for the extermination of kyrie. Kyrie have raided remote minotaur villages and hunting parties to steal food and weaponry.

Kyrie live together in lairs called "aeries:" a series of nests and caves in the cliffs of isolated mountain peaks. Their society is based on mutual protection and survival, centered around family units. Whether kyrie have a leader or not is unknown.

Kyrie eat rodents, small birds, fish, seeds and fruit. They have a special fondness for wine, but do not overindulge, preferring to sip it in small quantities.

The greatest weakness of the kyrie is that their young cannot fly for the first few years of life. Thus they cannot easily avoid raids of predators and must be protected by the adults.

## history

Minotaurs name the ancient, mythical race of birdmen the kyrie. The origins and nature of these mystical creatures are shrouded in mystery. However, as with the origin of many other races of Ansalon, some scholars suggest that Kyrie came into being due to the Graygem of Gargath. Perhaps they were mountain folk who longed to take wing.

Tales relate that the kyrie at one time dwelt in all the mountains and outlying islands of Ansalon. A nomadic people, they migrated across the waters of Krynn from isle to isle, it is said, with the aid of a magical artifact known only as the Northstone. Perhaps, this stone in some way enabled them to track the endless waves to find each isle in turn.

## Tools, weapons and Technology

Kyrie have the natural weapons all birds use: their beaks and claws. They are versed in the ancient world magic of animal kind and are one with nature and the winged creatures. No reports exist of kyrie wizards and it is suspected that they reject the magic of the three moons.

Those who have visited and lived to escape a kyrie nest report that they have little in the way of possessions, except for stone-headed axes and spears. They do collect bright and shiny things, such as coins, gems, shells and glass, but appear to put them to no purpose.



## Lost folk—Scions

### appearance

Scions are dwarven stock with golden skin and eyes and silver hair with a bald circle on top. They wear simple cloth tunics and pants that somehow resist soil, cold, heat, and wear. Scions can make themselves appear to be any other creature, including a dead friend. This appearance is purely illusory, however, for Scions can manipulate creatures' perceptions of reality.

Scions are said to be sterile due to their deep immersion in magic. Even so, reports of the involvement of Scions span at least two millennia of Ansalonian history. This fact implies that they are immortal. Perhaps they are.

### attitudes and lifestyle

Not much is known of the personality of Scions except that they are dwarven folk with a phenomenal propensity for magic. Beyond this point, speculations abound. Apparently Scions are meddlers, interested in change for change's sake. They are most likely beneficent, or at least neutral, for they could devastate the land in an instant if they so chose. In addition, the fact that so little is known about the Scions indicates that they are an evasive folk. Their history certainly gives them reason to avoid their thoroughly non-magical cousins, the dwarves. Scions therefore reputedly move through the world only in disguise.

### history

The history of the Scions is the history of the dwarves and gnomes of Ansalon. Tales say that when the Graygem of Gargath turned all of Taladas against the Smith folk, the Scions saved the people by building mighty barges to brave the seas. They even made the land rise into bulwarks to hold back the angry armies. After storm-tossed months at sea, in which only thirteen of the barges survived, the Smiths and Scions made landfall. The Smiths, grieved by their harrowing journey, seized the Scions and drowned all but thirteen—leaving one for each barge that had survived the trip. Then the thirteen were given the last barge and told to set out to sea and never return. The Smiths promised to kill any who ventured back.

The histories of Krynn tell of the Scions' return in the saga of the Second Dragon War. During this time, the thirteen Scions landed upon the shores of Ansalon. They each went their separate ways, gathering those who had grown adept at commanding wild magic. The Scions taught them its proper use.

Some scholars speculate that the Scions made landfall on the Dairly Plains. They claim that Claren Elian (now in ruins) was the first creation of the mages who had gathered to the Scions. Scholars who espouse this view point to strange god-marks upon the landscape, set up almost like a trail to lead wild mages to the cloister of Scions.

One splinter group of scholars has spent long years studying an apocryphal canon dubbed the Dairly Tablets. These tablets claim that "one of these sad creatures [Scions] fell into the hands of the madman [the Kingpriest]. He heaped abuse upon abuse on that venerable head. The madman blinded and hamstrung him, even took his manhood, hoping torture might loosen his tongue. But never did the sad one speak. Somehow still, the madman drew the powers from him, and

became a mighty tower of mystical arts. Commoners falsely believed this power a god gift, but it was not.

"At last, seeing but one end to his torment, the sad one tricked his tormenter to call down the curse that men call the Cataclysm. The sad one perished in the devastation, but his spirit might yet walk the land."

Although these passages are highly criticized by conservative historians, they raise interesting questions about the Scions. In any case, if Scions are immortal, as is supposed, some may still exist. If one died in the Cataclysm, perhaps the other twelve still dwell in Ansalon. Or perhaps, five of them. Or perhaps, one.

## Lost folk—Shadowpeople

### appearance



A race of apparent mammals, shadowpeople have been mistakenly described as slim apes. They actually bear more resemblance to humanized bats, though their "wings" are mere gliding membranes.

Shadowpeople have large, hairy heads with flattened, upturned noses, wide flaring ears and large green or amber eyes. They have two pairs of curved fangs, the lower pair protruding when their wide mouths are closed. A shadowperson yawn is actually a sign of challenge and aggression, baring their fangs. Shadowpeople's hands and feet bear long claws. Smooth gray, black, or dull-brown fur covers their bodies. A long patagium, or gliding membrane, connects their arms to their flanks.

They do not wear clothes, except for hooded robes when moving in the outside world beneath the sun (they are extremely sensitive to light). However, they may appear to wear fur bandoliers, ruffs and belts. In reality, these are small animals—ferrets, minks, marmots, chinchillas, and other rodents—clinging to their fur. Shadowpeople use a form of ESP (extra-sensory perception) with these animal friends, who act as their hands and living weapons.

Shadowpeople communicate with a series of squeaks, hoots, and growls, but more often use their natural talent at ESP to send and receive messages. All shadowpeople can send and receive thoughts telepathically to and from creatures within 60' if they share a common language and are not blocked by more than 3' of stone or 3" of metal.

### attitudes and lifestyle

To the surface dwellers of Krynn, shadowpeople are regarded as creatures of myth. Cherishing their privacy, shadowpeople seldom interact with other races, maintaining communities far from civilization. Shadowpeople are kind and benevolent and may unite with others in the cause of promoting good.

Rarely seen above ground, shadowpeople occasionally appeared to aid lost children and the elderly. The very young and very old are the most open to shadowpeople's ESP. Shadowpeople have an affinity with children, often speaking to them in the guise of imaginary companions.

Shadowpeople communities are built in catacombs and warrens underground and in the subterranean reaches of ruined cities. A typical settlement is made of a series of under-



ground chambers linked by a labyrinth of narrow tunnels and crawl-ways. Passages leading to the main living quarters are lined with traps for unwary intruders. The main living quarters consist of private dens, which are furnished with nests of cloth and fur, woven mats, and stone furniture. All chambers are well-vented and a series of carved channels bring a fresh stream of water. Other caverns are used to raise mushrooms and molds for food.

Shadowpeople do not covet gold and gems, but they are lovers of art and are masters of sculpting and painting.

Shadowpeople are organized in close-knit clans and family units. Shadowfolk are divided into two classes, counselors and shadow warriors. Counselors are non-combatants given to the raising of food and caring for young. Shadow warriors are skilled and able fighters, striking swiftly and silently and then fading back into the shadows.

The elusiveness of shadowfolk is legendary. They seem to appear and disappear at will, climb sheer walls, pass through solid stone, and stand in no place and two places at once. Shadowfolk's pale fur helps camouflage them and their ESP warns them to fade into and out of shadows. Their long claws and ability to glide explains their power to climb sheer walls. And though they seem bulky in form, their nimbleness and small frame allows them to squeeze through very narrow holes. And because all shadowfolk look alike to non-shadowpeople, two shadowfolk working in unison might present the illusion one person in two places.

Counselors can perform a ceremony that mindlinks them to each other. The result is the summoning of the spirit of the Revered Ancient One. This joined mind can answer any question within its collective intelligence, as well as cure small wounds and teleport those in its presence. It cannot, however, predict the future.

The Shadowfolk's diet consists of mushrooms and molds, insects and worms, rodents and blind cave fish.

Shadowpeople have no natural enemies save for the jarak-sinn. To these violent marauders, shadowpeople show no mercy. It is perhaps the resemblance of draconians to these fabled lizardmen that united the shadowfolk in defense of the Heroes of the Lance.

## history

The saga of the War of the Lance tells how the heroes encountered hidden allies within the very heart of the enemy's stronghold, Sanction. The heroes named these creatures the shadowpeople. They were the first citizens of Sanction before the humans came and before the Dread Queen established her City of Doom. Believed extinguished by their conquerors, the patient shadowpeople rallied to the cause of good, helping the heroes escape with word of the deceit of the Dark Queen's plot with the Good dragon eggs.

Where the shadowpeople dwell now, no one knows. Where they came from, many have guesses. Some say the shadowpeople are children of the Scions. They claim that before Istar and Ergoth, shadowpeople were born when wild magic mingled with the blood of primitive men. They became children of the moons and of the night.

## Lost folk—Thanoi

### appearance



Thanoi appear to be a cross between a walrus and a human. They have barrel-thick torsos with humanoid arms and legs, and walrus-like heads. Their eyes are small and dark. A coarse set of bristles, which they use to sweep aside snow and to strain drinking Water lines their upper lips. A thanoi's

broad feet are clawed and webbed. Their fingers are blunt and stubby, too awkward for a bow, but well-suited to wrap around an axe or spear.

Their coloration varies from dark gray to tan. Their hide hangs in blubbery folds, and the thick layers of fat beneath insulate them from the arctic temperatures.

Female thanoi are smaller than males (6' tall to their 8'). Their tusks are shorter and their hides are softer brown fur. Thanoi reach maturity in 20 years. Their lifespan is about 60 years.

These walrus folk move on land with a shuffling, waddling gait, but are swift swimmers. Thanoi speech is a cacophony of grunts, snarls and barks, supplemented by facial expression and chest slaps. The language is almost impossible for non-thanoi to master, although minotaurs have the best luck. Only a small number of thanoi can learn to pronounce Common.

### attitudes and lifestyle

Thanoi are a brutal, primitive, hostile race bent on destruction. Thanoi kill for the sheer joy of the battle. They distrust strangers, but cooperate with other evil creatures if it might help the thanoi become more powerful. Even so, thanoi are too independent to maintain an alliance for long.

Thanoi live only in subarctic and arctic regions. They dwell in nomadic tribes of many families. Thanoi homes are built from blocks of ice and heated and lighted with pots of burning oil.

The meanest, most aggressive male in the tribe is the leader. Females may adopt the role of the "kagog" or "medicine giver," similar to a herbalist in function. The thanoi diet consists of fish, seals, whales, and sea birds.

Thanoi make constant war with the barbarian ice Folk, and willingly abandon all other duties to wreak havoc on their enemy. Thanoi are not skilled combatants. They can use either weapons or tusks when attacking.

Thanoi are not treasure hoarders. They use shiny coins and gems as fishing lures. Thanoi often raise and train polar bears as trackers, mounts, and beasts of burden.

### Tools, weapons, and Technology

Thanoi produce only heavy weapons: long daggers of bone, stone clubs, axes, maces, and harpoons. Other tools and weapons of metal they steal from their prey, or demand as pact price from would-be allies. Thanoi may also fling pots of flaming oil at enemies.

Thanoi view magic with distaste. They responded to spellcasters with berserker rage, hoping to overwhelm and slay him. Thanoi view priests with the same distrust they accord wizards.







## Draconians

Draconians are not natural creatures—they are constructs of the Dark Queen, created by her to help in her conquest of the world. Because of their magical origins, draconians have peculiar powers and abilities.

**Appearance:** Draconians have short, stubby tails, lizard snouts, and scaly bodies. They are the twisted creations of dark magic used to mutate the eggs of Good dragons. There are five draconian sub-races: auraks hatched from the eggs of gold dragons, baaz from brass dragons, bozaks from bronze dragons, kapaks from copper dragons, and sivaks from silver dragons. All draconians but auraks have wings that allow them to glide a short distance. Only sivaks can fly. Whenever a draconian dies, enchanted energy courses from their body and may harm bystanders.

Scholars believe that draconians do not have sexes and do not mate. Their near immortality (1,000 years) and their origin in magic make procreation unnecessary. Dragonmen are invulnerable to many diseases and can survive on little food and water. They love ale and spirits.

**Personality and Powers:** All draconians are evil. Their heinous deeds and crude desires have won them hatred from humans and demihumans throughout Krynn. Corruption and perversity typify these folk. Draconians serve the Dark Queen and her generals faithfully and unquestioningly. They feel no fear in a dragon's presence, but rather a reinforcing awe. Humans and demihumans mercilessly hunt draconians. Some bands of adventurers even specialize in eliminating these offspring of evil.

### aurak Draconians



Auraks are special agents of the Queen of Darkness. They can move among other races undetected. They are the rarest and most powerful of all draconians, and have an arsenal of attacks and defenses to choose from. Auraks cannot fly, but move swiftly on foot and can occasionally teleport up to 60

yards away.

Auraks have very acute senses, with infravision and the ability to detect hidden and invisible creatures within 40 yards. They can also see through illusions.

Auraks have several natural defenses that can be invoked at will. They can become invisible at will. They can take on the shape of any animal their size several times in one day. They have a natural resistance to magic. Finally, auraks can perfectly imitate the appearance and voice of any humanoid they have seen. They can retain this form for about 10 minutes, and use it thrice per day. The widespread rumors that auraks smell of sulfur are merely wishful thinking. Unfortunately, the Dark Queen's spies can be detected neither by sight nor smell.

Auraks have a variety of offensive attacks. They generate bursts of energy from each hand, and can hit enemies within arms' length. Alternately, auraks can attack with their claws and teeth. In addition, they can exhale a huge, noxious cloud of gas. Victims caught in the cloud suffer chemical burns and are temporarily blinded.

Auraks use magic spells and an innate ability for mystical attacks. Each day, an aurak can cast up to eight spells, including such effects as shocking *grasp*, an electrical jolt delivered to those he touches; *blink*, which allows him to pop randomly and instantly from one location to another within a room; and *wall of fire*, which creates a blazing curtain of flame. Mind control is the auraks' most insidious power, as it allows the aurak to direct another creature's body as though it were his own.

When an aurak suffers a mortal wound, the escaping magical energy causes him to burst into green flames and enter a fighting frenzy, wildly attacking all around him. Like a leaking helium balloon, his body shrinks into a whizzing ball of green lightning, and finally explodes in a shower of magical force.

### Baaz Draconians



Weak of mind and character, baaz appear as men with scaly, patterned skin. Small wings, which baaz often cover with cloaks or other clothes, protrude from their shoulder bones. Although the facial appearance of each baaz is as distinct as any man's, many of these draconians have doglike snouts. Baaz often masquerade as humans through the use of masks and bulky clothing. The most "human" appearing baaz are usually employed as spies.

Baaz were created by injecting a hardening liquid into ripening dragon eggs. When alive, baaz remain fleshlike, despite the hardened liquid in their bodies. However, when the creatures are killed, they turn to a substance similar to stone-trapping whatever weapon dealt the final blow until the stone crumbles to dust a few minutes later.

Baaz are the smallest and most plentiful draconians. They are especially sadistic when drunk. They prefer to use easily concealed weapons when ambushing their prey. In pitched battles they favor long swords and spears.

### Bozak Draconians



These warped dragon offspring are typically 6 to 6½ feet tall. They are covered with bronze-hued scales. The scales are small and fishlike on the draconian's face, hands, and feet, but are about the size of a copper piece on the remainder of the body. Although limited in flying ability, bozaks have

learned to glide indefinitely in strong winds. They prefer gliding at night, when they are safer from the eyes of humans.

When killed, a bozak's flesh becomes dry and brittle, turning to dust. The bones begin to vibrate, and finally they explode.

Bozaks are the most cautious of the draconians, serving as special forces and commanders for their Dark Queen. Their caution is reflected in their preference for magic and missile (shot or thrown) weapons over hand-to-hand combat. They prefer such spells as burning hands, which allows the creature to shoot flames from its fingertips, and *web*, which builds a sticky mass of spiderweb-like strands to trap victims.

## Kapak Draconians



Kapaks sport a short mane that hangs down to one side of their mouths. Their large, leathery wings make them fair at gliding. They disdain clothes, as worthless trappings of humans. However, they have been known to wear trophies of their kills—necklaces, bracers, and other shiny objects.

Kapaks are generally ignorant, ill-mannered, famished, and witless. They are best-suited to a military lifestyle, where their movements and actions are directed by more intelligent draconians, such as baaz or bozaks. A force of kapak foot soldiers is dangerous, swift, and surprisingly strong. They prefer close fighting, where their venomous saliva and curving claws work to best effect.

Kapaks serve as skirmishers and assassins in the Dark Queen's army. They are notorious for their venomous bite. Before entering combat, they often lick their weapons to coat them with poisonous saliva. As the poison evaporates from a weapon rapidly, it is not uncommon to see a fighter pause in his attack for another lick. When a kapak is slain, its body dissolves into a pool of acid.

## Sivak Draconians



Sivaks are the largest and sturdiest draconians. They are the elite forces of the dragonarmies, shock troops wielding mighty flails and two-handed swords. Even so, like kapaks, they need direction. Their small minds have trouble concocting long-range plans and elaborate tactics. Birthed from the eggs of

ragons, sivaks gleam like polished coins. Their eyes are dark, however, as black as their corrupt souls. Their great strength makes them accomplished fliers, and when they take wing during the day, the brilliance of their scales is dazzling.

The most devastating ability of the sivaks is their mastery of shapechanging. They can assume the form and voice of someone they have just killed. Sivaks delight in masquerading as their victims. They can change back to their normal form at will, but cannot regain a humanoid form until they kill again. This shapechanging ability allows sivaks to function well as spies.

Gruesomely, if it is slain by a humanoid, a sivak shapechanges into a replica of its killer. It retains this death shape for 3 days before the walking corpse bursts into flames and is reduced to black soot. If a sivak is killed by a monster or giant, the draconian corpse bursts into flames immediately.

## Dragons

Dragons are unchallenged as the most powerful children of Krynn. These massive reptiles are covered with thick scales from their tail-tips to their toothy mouths. They have wings strong enough to bear them aloft and to produce a devastating blast of air. The ten greater dragon types of Krynn belong to two families: the evil chromatic dragons (black, blue, green, red, and white) and the good metallic dragons (brass, bronze, copper, gold, and silver). These colors designate the various elemental forces from which the dragons were forged.

Krynn also has unique, lesser dragons—sea dragons, amphi dragons, and others hinted in legends to exist.

All dragons are supremely intelligent and are feared by those who behold them. The natural awe felt by living beings for creatures much larger than themselves is augmented by dragons' innate ability to project the emotion of fear. As the shadow of a hawk overhead causes chickens to scatter, so the aura of a dragon affects humans, demihumans, livestock, and wild beasts alike. A person might steel himself against this aura, but he will never be unaware of its presence.

Even so, Krynnish dragons have many dealings with humans. Evil dragons often ally with evil humans, and good dragons share an almost mystical bond with the humans who have won their trust.

Dragons' powers grow greater with age.

Dragons have excellent senses. Their sight is so keen they can detect invisible creatures, and find hidden objects. Their hearing increases with age, an opposite effect from what most humans suffer.

When dragons fight, they claw, bite, kick, slap their tails, and buffet opponents with their wings. But first and foremost, they breathe. While St. George fought a dragon that breathed fire, on Krynn, each dragon species has its own specialty breath. Dragons are smart enough to use their more dangerous attacks against their more dangerous foes when they face many enemies at once.

## Amphi Dragons



This horrendous toad-like dragon is a crossbreed between a green dragon and a sea dragon. It has inherited the worst qualities of both. It cannot fly, and moves awkwardly on land.

Amphis most often attack ships at sea, and avoid coastal communities. An amphi dragon may attack a ship without provocation. First the dragon employs its magical spells. If these don't do the trick, it breathes or spits an enormous stream of acid.

Amphi dragons hate having to use their animal natures and fight physical battles. However, if they are forced into it, they are protected by their acid-oozing warts. They can also, like a frog after a fly, attempt to grab their enemies with their long, sticky tongues.

Amphidragons can change skin color to match their surroundings. If they remain still, they are nearly undetectable.



## Black Dragons

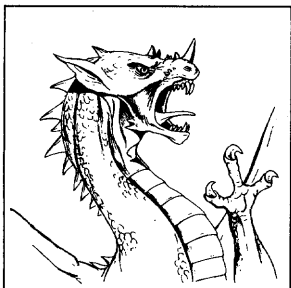


These great, slimy lizards usually make their homes in marshes and jungles. They prey upon animals for sustenance. Dark as the bogs they dwell in, black dragons are difficult to notice. Black dragons are impulsive and nervous, tending to act first and think later. Because of their independence, they are seldom

used by Takhisis except in times of great need. Black dragons are unpredictable in what they hold precious. Some dragons have been known to amass and covet piles of coins and gems, while great wyrms have collected only weapons and possessions of men, which they cannot themselves use.

Black dragons save their spells in combat until they believe they are in jeopardy. They breathe a deadly stream of acid, and are quick to fight with their claws, wings, tail, and vicious teeth. A black dragon's favorite spell is darkness, because it allows him to attack under cover. Black dragons easily breathe water.

## Blue Dragons



These immense, sapphire-hued lizards bask in deserts and arid lands, making their lairs in caves beneath the sand. Unlike most other evil dragons, blues are quick to work together toward a common goal. Blue dragons can breathe a lethal bolt of lightning nearly 100'

long. They consider their breath weapon superior to those of other dragons, as the bolt is precise, devastating and powerful.

Blue dragons are valued allies in times of warfare because they understand how to cooperate. Sometimes, the bond they share with their allies is such that they are plunged into deep depression when one of them dies, hindering the remainders' effectiveness in battle.

## Brass Dragons



Like blue dragons, brasses favor arid, sandy regions where the hot sun can properly toast their shiny scales. Although good-natured, these dragons are selfish, boisterous, and overly proud. Their weakness is their desire for small talk. And because they know dozens of languages, it is easy for them to

find other creatures with whom to converse. Despite their love for gab, brass dragons have little interest in art or culture. They are benevolent and understanding, but they ultimately believe the weak should be weeded from the strong, and superior beings allowed to flourish.

Brass dragons prefer to attack with their claws and teeth, saving their magic for dire situations. They can choose between breathing a cloud of sleeping gas or a wave of heat.

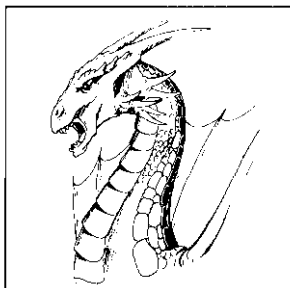
## Bronze Dragons



Bronze dragons lair near fresh or salt water, and near settlements of humans and demihumans. They are fond of treasure, but only seek it from evil sources.

Bronze dragons dislike killing, though they are fascinated by war, and enjoy defeating evil creatures. They are very curious about humans and demihumans. They prefer attacking creatures smaller than they with tail, teeth, and claws, reserving spells for intelligent opponents. Bronze dragons can breathe both lightning and a cloud of gas that repulses those it touches. They are likely to use ESP to determine their opponents' strategies and intentions.

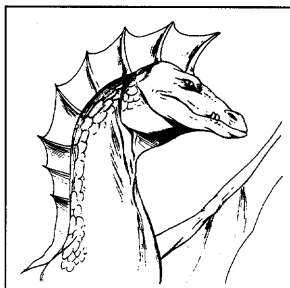
## Copper Dragons



Perhaps the most selfish of Good dragons, copper dragons are still very good-hearted. They easily give in to the arguments of others, and often consult with other dragons before making important decisions. They are loyal to their friends, but distrust strangers.

Although copper dragons are the smallest of the metallic dragons, they command magic well, are crafty fighters and excellent jumpers. They lair in rocky, mountainous regions. Copper dragons resist fighting, attacking only when creatures dear to them are in jeopardy. In any combat situation, copper dragons begin their assault by breathing a cloud of slowness gas, and following up with any non-damaging spells they know. If their attackers won't go away, coppers can always breathe a stream of acid on them.

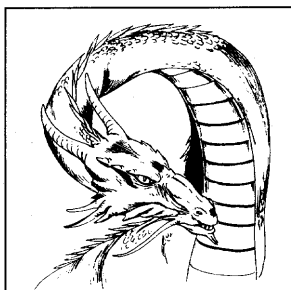
## Green Dragons



Green dragons are notorious even among evil dragons for their cruel natures and vicious tempers. They are cunning opponents, and only follow leaders whom they respect. They prefer trickery and magic to all-out combat. Green dragons lair in wild, forested areas, usually underground. There, in large chambers, they pass the days counting their piles of treasure.

Those old enough to have mastered shells use their magic first if they are attacked or threatened. They prefer not to get their claws dirty. Green dragons breathe a cloud of chlorine gas.

## GOLD DRAGONS



Golds are the most magnificent of Krynn's dragons. Priding themselves on their great intelligence, many golds have become scholars, mathematicians, philosophers, and artists. Like silvers, they can change into human and demihuman form and walk freely in the communities of men.

However, golds are arrogant, and they do not get as attached to "lessers"—humans—as do their silver brethren. Golds can dwell in anywhere, although they prefer mountainous regions.

Gold dragons prefer to use spells over physical combat. They often seek formal magical schooling, and like mortal wizards, they keep spell books. Golds can breathe either a cone of fire or a cloud of chlorine gas.

By touching it, a gold dragon can enchant a gem to bring good luck. (While the dragon carries it, the gem continuously recharges. If given to a human or demihuman, the gem's luck wears off after a day or two.)

## RED DRAGONS

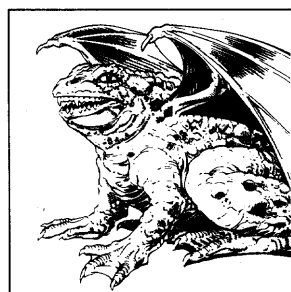


The most powerful of evil dragonkind, red dragons are greedy and covetous. They begrudgingly cooperate with other dragons, but refuse orders if they disagree. They love death and destruction, and are fanatically loyal to the Dark Queen.

Red Dragons lair high in hills and mountains so they can watch the goings-on around them. The strongest among their multi-hued brethren, they point out their superiority. Like greens, they avoid actually grappling with their quarry.

Whether picking a fight or serving in an army's assault, red dragons begin with spells, especially those that leave a foe's valuable possessions intact. Since their breath is a fiery cone of white-hot flame which melts all coins and destroys magic and gems, reds use it only as a last resort.

## SEA DRAGONS



Sea dragons look like they might be a cross between a giant turtle and a dragon. They dwell in the oceans of Krynn and are quick to attack ships and small coastal communities. A sea dragon's territory covers several hundred square miles. The dragons are loathe to leave their territory. Few creatures

and men who have trespassed lived to tell of it.

A sea dragon can breathe a cone of steam. From birth, it can breathe both water and air.

## SILVER DRAGONS



been known to fall in love with their human companions, which has created awkward-and sometimes tragic—relationships.

Silver dragons usually construct their lairs near favorite human communities. This allows the dragons to visit their human friends easily and to protect them.

Silver dragons believe that the purpose of life is to devote themselves to the cause of good and justice. They will go to war only reluctantly, but will give their lives for a cause in which they believe.

The most famous silver dragon in Krynn is Silvara, who took the form of a Kagonesti elfmaid. The dragon fell in love with a lord of the Qualinesti elves, Gilthanas. The elf could not accept Silvara's dragon form, however. It is suspected a great misfortune befell the two, as they disappeared from the face of Krynn.

Silver dragons can breathe a cone of perilously cold air, as well as a cloud of paralyzing gas.

## WHITE DRAGONS



Although physically and mentally the weakest of the evil reptiles, white dragons are terrible foes who rarely associate with their malicious, other-colored cousins. These palest of dragons are extremely haughty, preferring solitude, as they consider no other dragon their intellectual match. They consider all other creatures beneath dragonkind.

White dragons enjoy cold climates, land coated with snow and ice and unsullied by men. White dragons served Takhisis as scouts in the defense of the Icewall. White dragons collect little treasure, as they are loathe to bother themselves with inferior possessions. However, most of what they do own is nearly flawless-gems of the purest quality and jewelry of unrivaled beauty.

White dragons breathe a cloud of frost on their opponents before hitting them with other magical and physical attacks. White dragons often pursue creatures underwater, where they are just as effective.

## *goblins*

### *appearance*

Goblins are short, flat-nosed creatures with bright red skin; they stand about 4' feet tall and weigh about 80 lbs. Hobgoblins bear the same bad traits of their little cousins on a large scale. These angle-faced, fanged horrors grow as much as 6-1/2' tall and weigh about 240 pounds. Bugbears are larger yet, 7' tall and covered with fur. A stalking bugbear carries his 300 pounds in a shambling (but deceptively stealthy) walk. All goblins have fangs, and (reputedly) poisonous blood.

Goblins wear whatever they can find, but they all enjoy uniforms and badges of rank (often stolen).

### *attitudes and lifestyles*

Goblins are on the whole unpleasant and brutal creatures. Although some folk have known non-Evil goblins, or even intelligent ones, these examples are clearly exceptions. Most goblin folk are honorless brutes who want only to kill, eat, sleep, and pass gas.

**Born Killers:** What do goblins do for a living? Kill! Kill! And kill again! All goblins are vicious fighters with no sense of honor or justice, and they have no compunction about using anything as a weapon, no matter how dangerous it may prove to be. They revel in glory, reject fear and cowardice in battle, and have very good reasons for giving ground when they themselves retreat.

**Snivelling:** Although fierce in battle, among themselves goblinkin can be world-class grovelers, bootlickers, and whiners, able to flatter shamelessly and deflect blame almost as an unconscious reaction. Superiors expect this treatment and bully their inferiors, and they in turn appease their masters in the same way. Much of this snivelling is simply a cover for the backstabbing, double-crossing, and treachery each goblin holds in his heart.

**Shortsightedness:** As a group, the goblin races rarely look beyond their next meal, battle, or plunder. This makes them excellent troops for evil leaders who need a quick army. Fortunately, this character flaw also limits goblins' ability to carry out extended campaigns against civilized lands. Goblins aggressively take what they want but have little patience for long-term sieges and marches.

**Mighteousness:** The goblin races believe in force. Consequently, their leaders are the strongest and fiercest members among them. Merging separate tribes into an army is nearly impossible because goblins from other tribes may as well be elves.

**Honorlessness:** Goblins have no shame, and will lie, cheat, or steal to get what they want. No contract with a goblin is binding unless one is in a position to enforce it. This doesn't mean that goblins never cooperate or that they steal constantly. They cooperate if they must or if it serves their own interests, and they steal only when they think they can get away with it.

The goblin's life centers around the tribe, where they are born and will most likely die. The high mortality rate among young goblins is balanced by a massive breeding rate. However, goblins suffer from their continual inbreeding. Deformities are common. Some unusual features or marks are considered lucky. Other defects, such as blindness or lameness, which leave an infant goblin unable to fight, are dealt with barbarically: the infants are left exposed to the elements.

Even as adults, goblins do not suffer the weak to live. The strong rule, and the strong are not always the bright.

Military ranks among goblins correspond directly to political power; warchiefs and generals are goblins' princes and nobles. The only exceptions to this are the shamen and witch-doctors, who are held in respect for their power although they are rarely given direct command over troops or raiders.

Most goblin tribes are semi-nomadic, wandering from place to place like a plague of bandits, stripping an area until it is despoiled or the local militia rouses itself. Some few tribes have managed to wrest small villages from their previous inhabitants. Goblin rule over these villages rarely outlasts a moon cycle, but such "goblin towns" are the highest form of goblin civilization.

### *history*

The goblin nations cannot top human empires, elven magic, dwarven forge-craft, gnomish technology, or even kender wanderlust. Goblins, however, are matchless pillagers: they have the strength to take from others. And stealing suits them because goblins are poor cousins to the other sentient races of Ansalon. Though they have the same spark of soul and spirit as the other races, they have yet to capitalize on it. Triumphs of civilization are beyond them. Their history is a long and complicated recitation of violence.

The goblin races of Krynn include only goblins, hobgoblins, and bugbears. (Krynn has no orcs.) Kobolds, often noted as a goblin race, are reptilian by nature and are therefore related to lizard men. All the goblin races are the descendants of the ogres, changed by the Graygem into smaller, twisted forms that reflect their corrupted inner nature.

For ages, goblins have been raiders on the outskirts of civilization, little more than scavengers of fallen nations. The Cataclysm has created many fallen nations—a rich field for harvest. Some goblin shamen are preaching that the time of the goblin races is at hand.

Recently goblin races prospered under the leadership of the Dragon Highlords and a few exceptionally charismatic goblin leaders. Fewmaster Toede is one such leader, a hobgoblin able to command fanatical loyalty from his followers. Although rumors say that Toede died in the great War of the Lance at the hands of either a kender or a dragon, no firm evidence confirms his death. His habit of dressing troops to resemble him makes it quite possible that his assassin killed someone else.

### *Tools, Weapons, and Technology*

Goblins have almost no native technology. They lack the basic ability to forge weapons and tools, relying instead on scavenging and impressing slaves to get what they want. They do, however, excel at making things stop working.

Some tribes have, however, developed complicated signaling codes for use in battle. Goblin horns and drums can relay orders quickly and efficiently, allowing goblins who possess them to respond in unison to any attack.

Goblins and hobgoblins wear either leather armor or piecemeal armor, including scavenged splint and chain mail pieces. They most often carry wooden shields.

## The Companions

The greatest contemporary heroes on Krynn are the Heroes of the Lance. Sometimes the group is known as the Companions. In truth, the two terms are not exactly synonymous. The Companions, as enumerated in the dwarven ballad *Song of the Nine Heroes*, are Flint Fireforge, Tasslehoff Burrfoot, Goldmoon, Riverwind, Kitiara Uth Matar, Sturm Brightblade, Caramon Majere, Tanis Half-Elven, and Raistlin Majere. However, the mercenary Kitiara broke their common oath to re-gather after five years of solitary adventuring. The Heroes of the Lance include two other women not cited in the ballad, Tika Waylan and Laurana.

These thumbnail sketches, in alphabetical order, introduce the heroes and companions.

**Sturm Brightblade:** Though only a few years older than the twins, Sturm has the deep seriousness and dedicated purpose more often found in middle age. Sturm's ambition is to be accepted into the Knights of Solamnia, a military order in which his father served years ago, and which has recently fallen into disfavor. He holds the Oath and the Measure, codes of knightly behavior, in highest regard. His stubborn, almost fanatical insistence on chivalric behavior can annoy, sometimes even endanger his companions.

**Tasslehoff Burrfoot:** Tasslehoff is a kender, and like all of his race, immune to fear. Consequently, what Tas considers interesting might send other folk screaming in terror. Friendly, inquisitive, irrepressible, Tas wanders the face of Krynn, popping from adventure to adventure like a mad jackrabbit. His nimble fingers and insatiable curiosity lead him to fondle and examine every shiny, expensive, interesting item he comes across. His short attention span lets him forget to put them back. Tas is slow to anger, but when he does lose his temper, his voice becomes shrilly strident in the best manner of a proverbial fishwife.

**Flint Fireforge:** The oldest of the companions, Flint constantly grumbles and complains his way across the world. This gruff exterior hides a thoughtful, considerate dwarf. Flint considers himself the voice of wisdom and maturity among the companions. Although he has retired from metalsmithing, Flint cannot help but accompany the youngsters he considers his "children" as they adventure across Krynn. Flint is afraid of boats.

**Coldmoon:** The Chieftam's Daughter and leader of her barbarian tribe, Goldmoon drives herself and her countryman, Riverwind, hard. Raised to consider herself a god over her people, Goldmoon has *come* to know her own frailty and mortality. She is quiet and contemplative, determined to discover the true meaning of faith.

**Tanis Half-Elven:** Tanis is the leader of the companions, the one the others turn to when impassés arise, and doubt clouds the obvious. He looks to be a contemporary of the "youngsters," but his elven blood suspends the affects of aging: Tanis is over a hundred years old.

The product of rape, a child of mixed blood, Tanis has always been an outsider. He doubts his own wisdom and abilities even as his friends praise them. And he is hopelessly entangled in his desire for Kitiara and Laurana, unable to

choose between the elven woman or the human.

**Laurana:** The daughter of the Speaker of the Suns, Lauralanthalasa (Laurana, as she is commonly known) is one of the most beautiful of the Qualinesti elves. Her golden hair and almond eyes, however, clothe a heart as brave and determined as any warrior. Raised in pampered comfort as a scribe in her father's house, Laurana could not resist the challenge Tanis made her-to grow up, and see the dangers in the world. Her courage and dignity, coupled with her intimate knowledge of court and politics, make her an opponent to be reckoned with.

**Caramon Majere:** A big, brawny young man, Caramon is blessed with great physical strength. However, his mind is not as quick as his sword hand. This slow-wittedness is an endless source of jibes and sarcasm for his twin brother, Raistlin. Caramon suffers Raistlin's taunts because he loves his frail brother. He has always protected him, no matter how hostile Raistlin gets.

Like the classic big, dumb guy, Caramon is slow to anger and eager to see the good side of everyone. He is cheerful, interested in physical strength, good food, and willing women. But because of his deep love for his twin, Caramon is forced to confront the deeper issues of life: trust, love, and betrayal.

**Raistlin Majere:** Frail, thin and sickly, Raistlin is impatient with the burden of his illness, and bitter about the concessions he must make to his failing health. His lungs are congested, his voice a harsh whisper. He frequently coughs up blood.

But his physical troubles are made up for by his *enormous* strength of will. Raistlin's temper is uncertain—he can be cruelly sarcastic, coldly cynical, and on rare occasions, tenderly compassionate. His kindness is generally extended only to children and misfits. Raistlin is a scholar and a mage, driven by the quest for sorcerous power.

**Riverwind:** The tall, dark-skinned, dark-haired barbarian Riverwind is Coldmoon's escort and protector. Though he loves the Chieftain's Daughter, his own low birth makes it impossible to ask for her hand. Dour and silent, Riverwind does not make friends easily. He distrusts non-humans. He would do anything for Goldmoon, including sacrificing his life.

**Kitiara Uth Matar:** Kitiara, elder half-sister to the twins, is a mercenary soldier, willing to work as a hired sword for whoever is paying. Her crooked grin and sensuous nature have ensnared Tanis' senses, but Kit is too ambitious to be bound to one man or one place. She keeps friends only as long as they are useful.

**Tika Waylan:** The flame-haired barmaid from the Inn of the Last Home, Tika grew up watching the Majere twins and their friends, hanging on their tales of adventure and excitement. When Solace was burned by the invading dragonarmy, Tika joined her friends in their quest. She is naive, eager, and tempestuous. Her skill with weapons is no match for her hand with a simple skillet, but she is determined to learn. Her love for Caramon is all-encompassing.



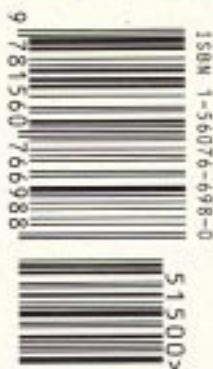
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